



**CivicCon Evening Event in Pensacola, Florida, August 12, 2019**

# Excellence with Equity

**Ronald F. Ferguson, PhD**

Faculty Director, the Achievement Gap Initiative Harvard University  
& Co-Founder, Tripod Education Partners



***Latent potential  
waiting to be  
harvested.***

***A life journey to be  
guided  
by family, teachers,  
and peers.***

## ***Sure as Sunlight***

*There is a child here in your caring  
who may someday cure all cancer  
but you've got to lay the groundwork  
so that it can come to pass.*

*She is a child who has not blossomed  
so you cannot see her brilliance  
but as sure as there is sunlight  
she is here now in your class.*

*I cannot tell you what her name is  
nor her height, nor weight, nor color,  
only that she is potentially  
a history-making lass.*

© 2000, Ronald F. Ferguson



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**THE CHILD-LEVEL GOAL:  
A FULLY-REALIZED HUMAN BEING**

Smarts + Purpose +  
Agency  
=  
A Fully Realized Human  
Being

From Ferguson and Robertson, 2019, *The Formula*. (See slides below)

# There are no throw-away ages in developing fully-realized human beings



**0-3**

# There are no throw-away ages in developing fully-realized human beings



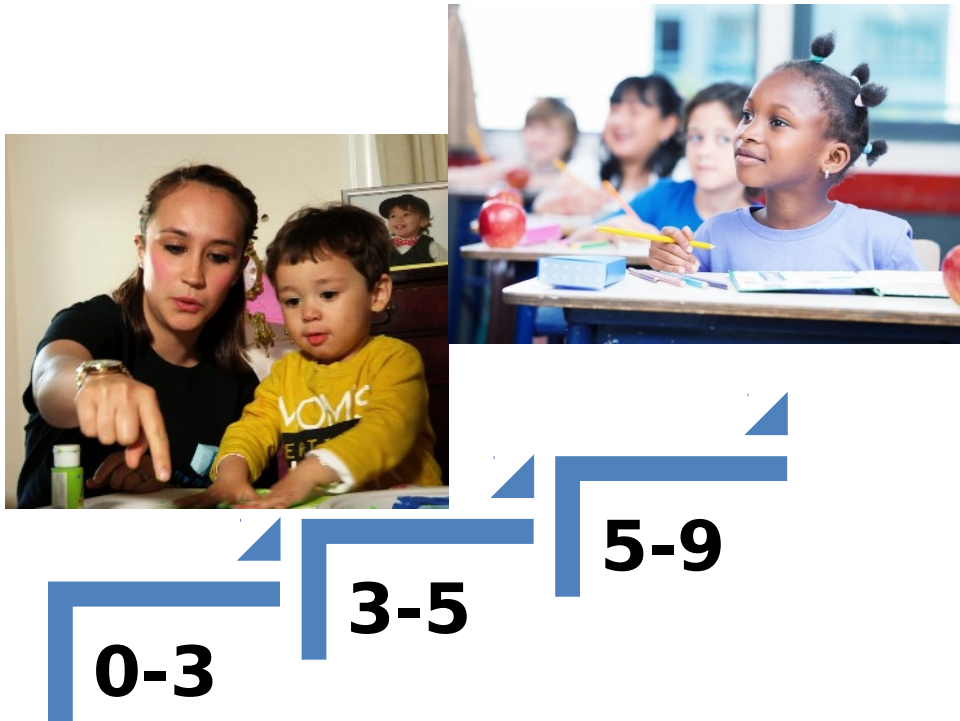
**0-3**

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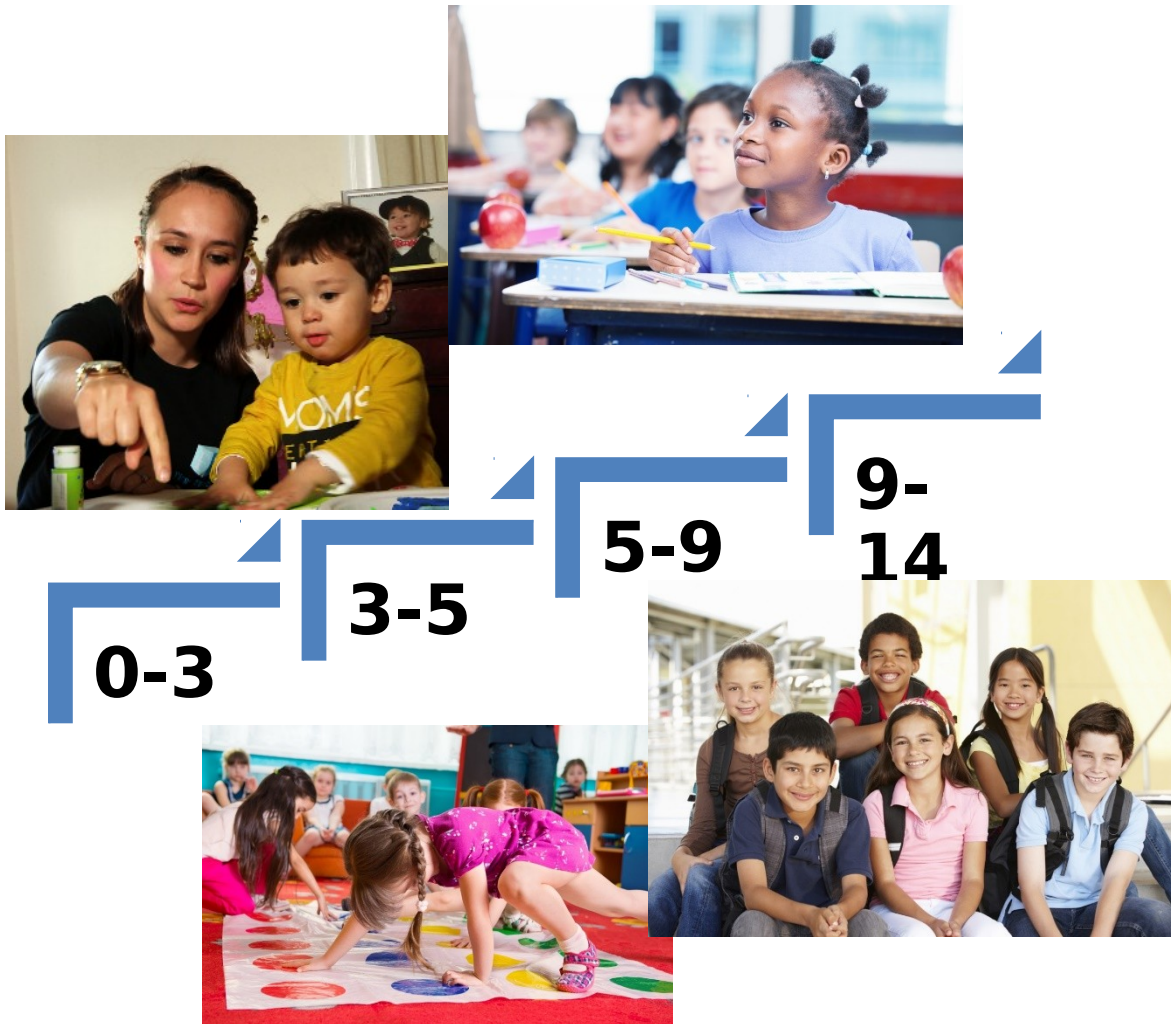




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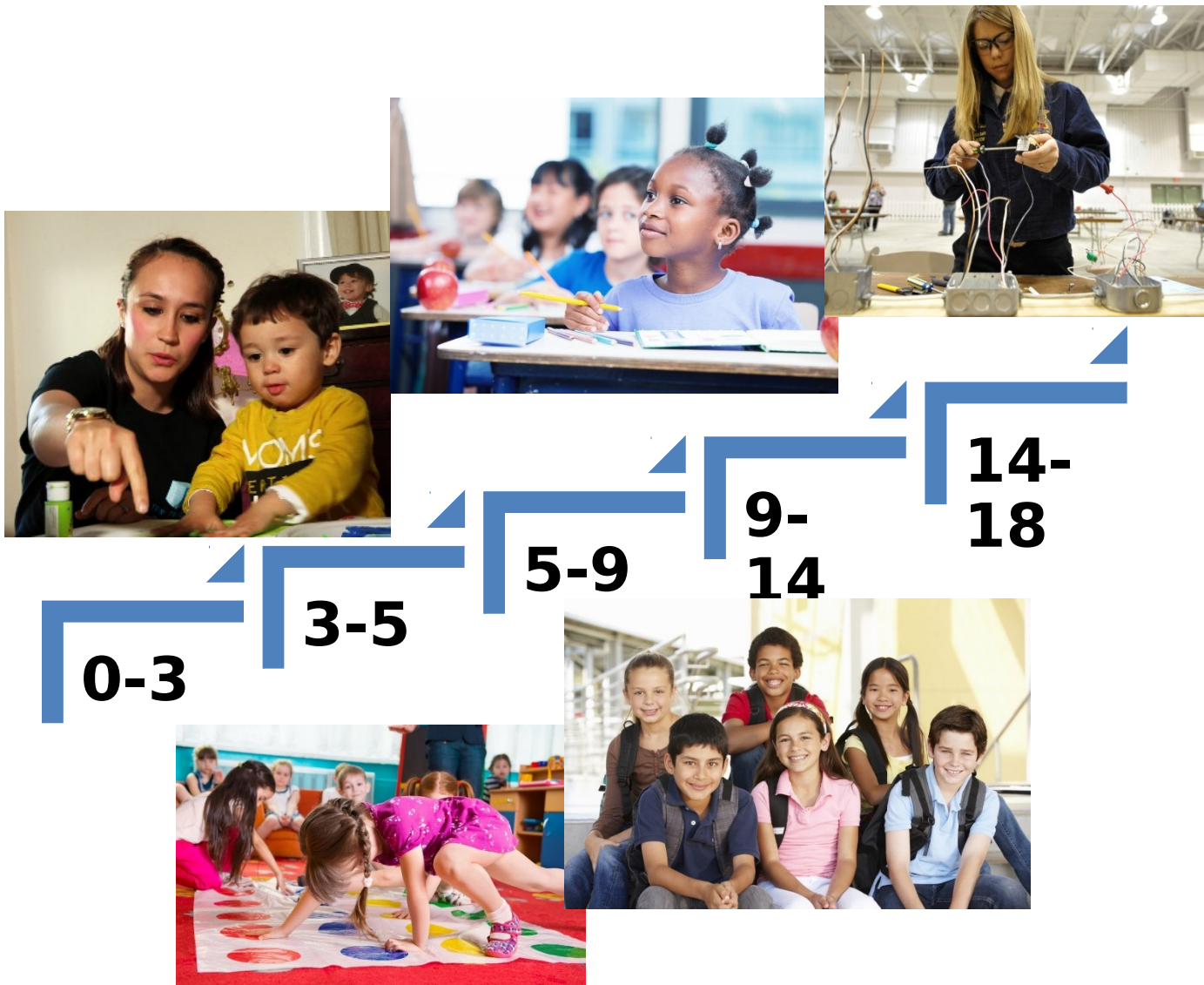


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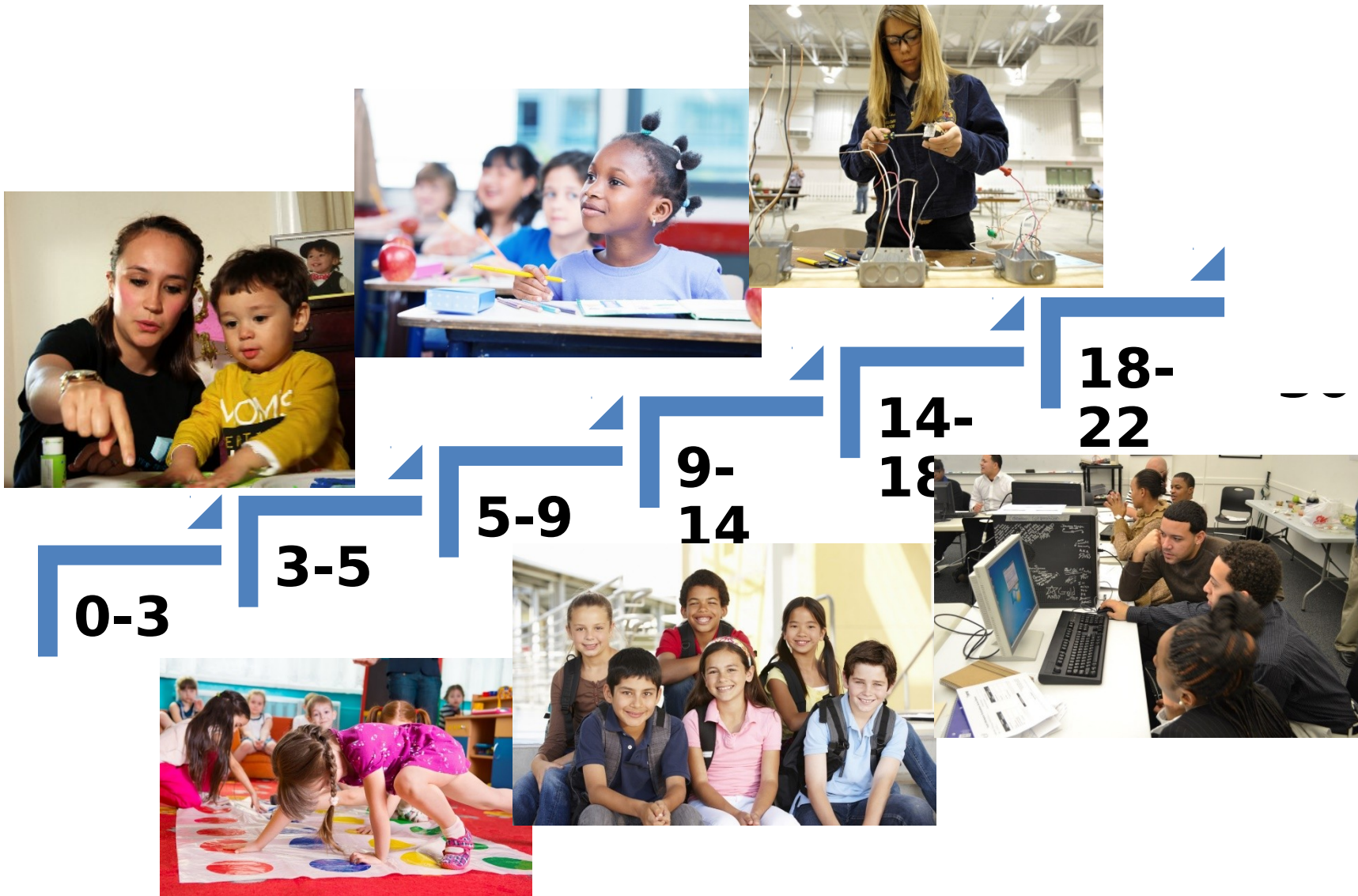




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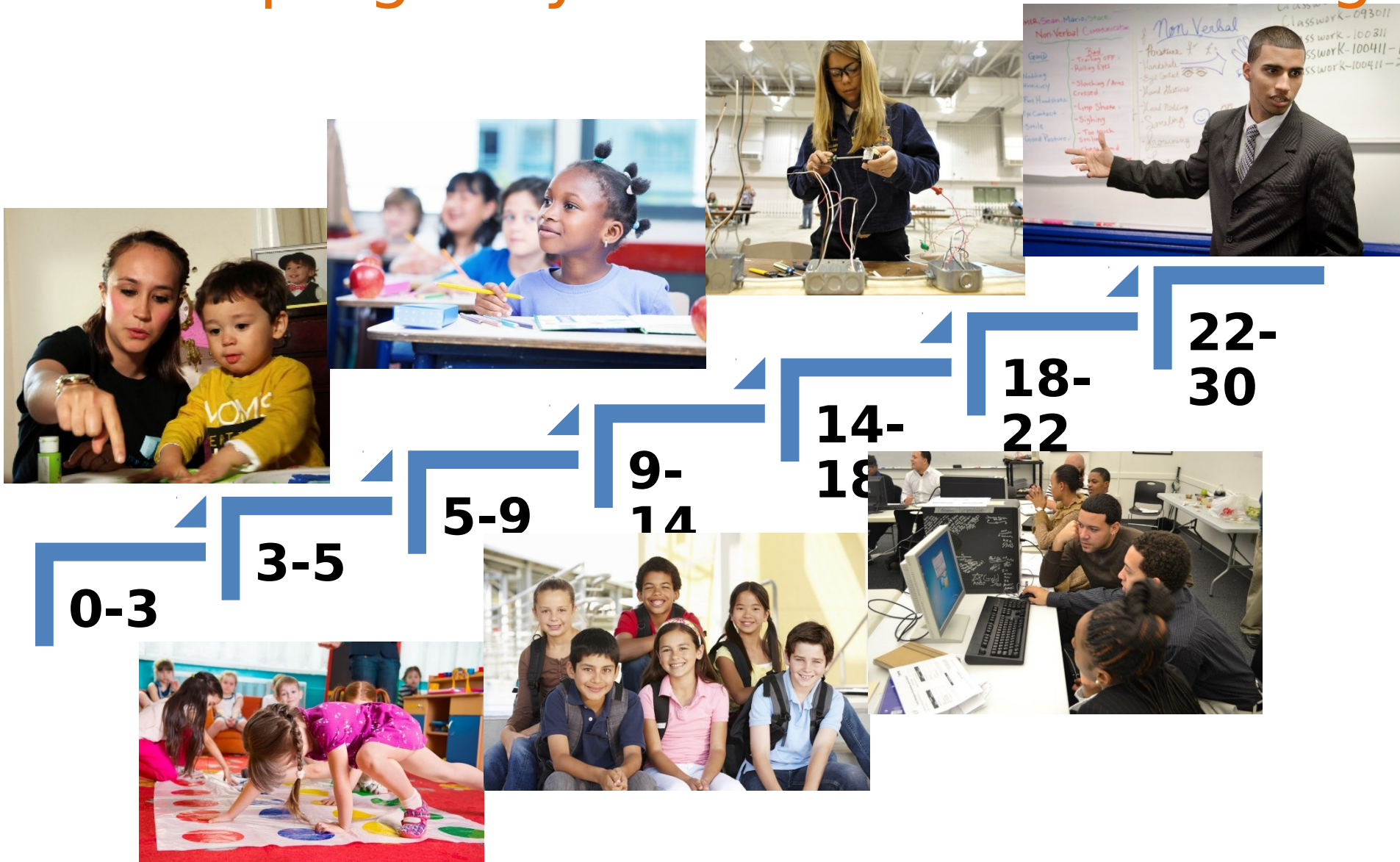


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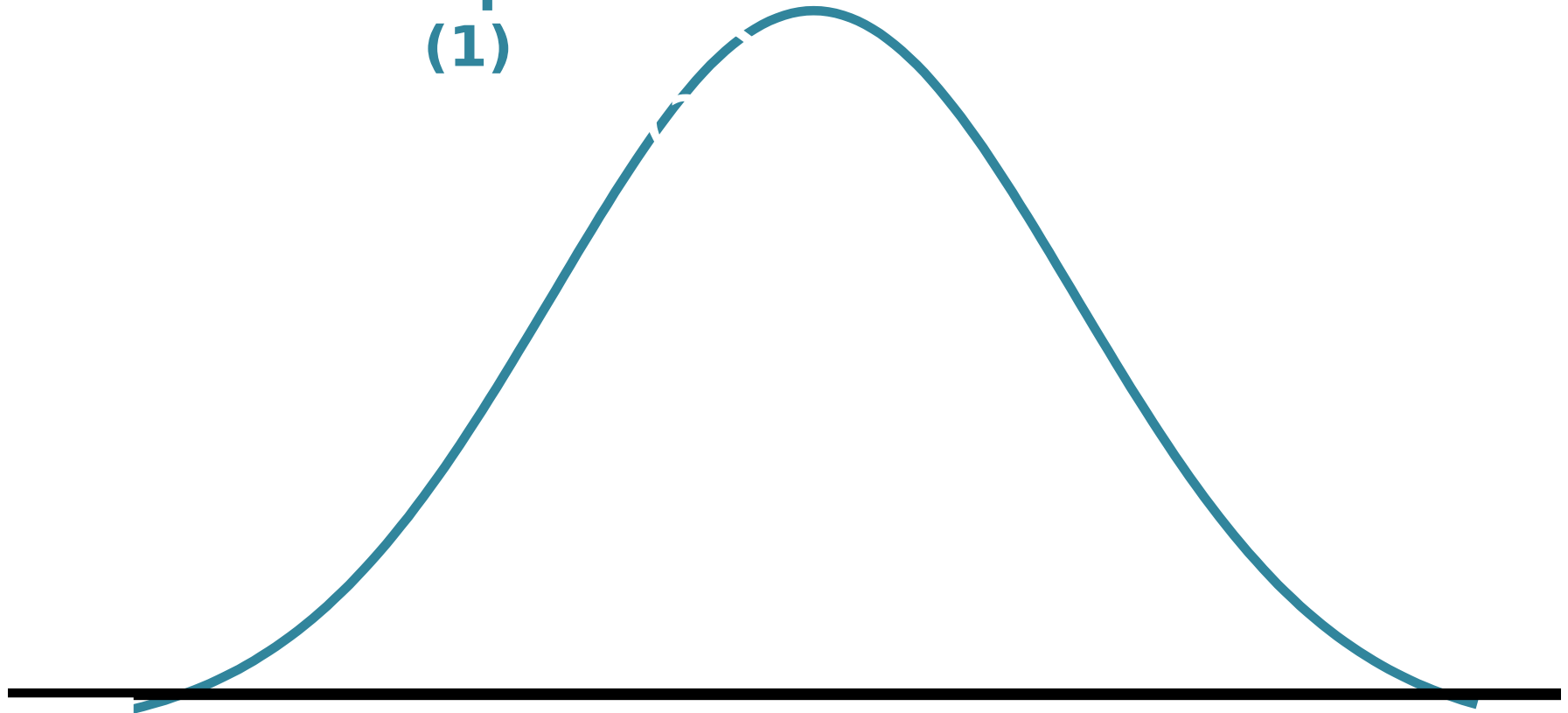


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**THE COMMUNITY-LEVEL GOAL:  
EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY**

Currently, there are large achievement gaps.

**Gro  
up  
(1)**



**Horizontal Axis represents Marketable Skills**



Currently, there are large achievement gaps.

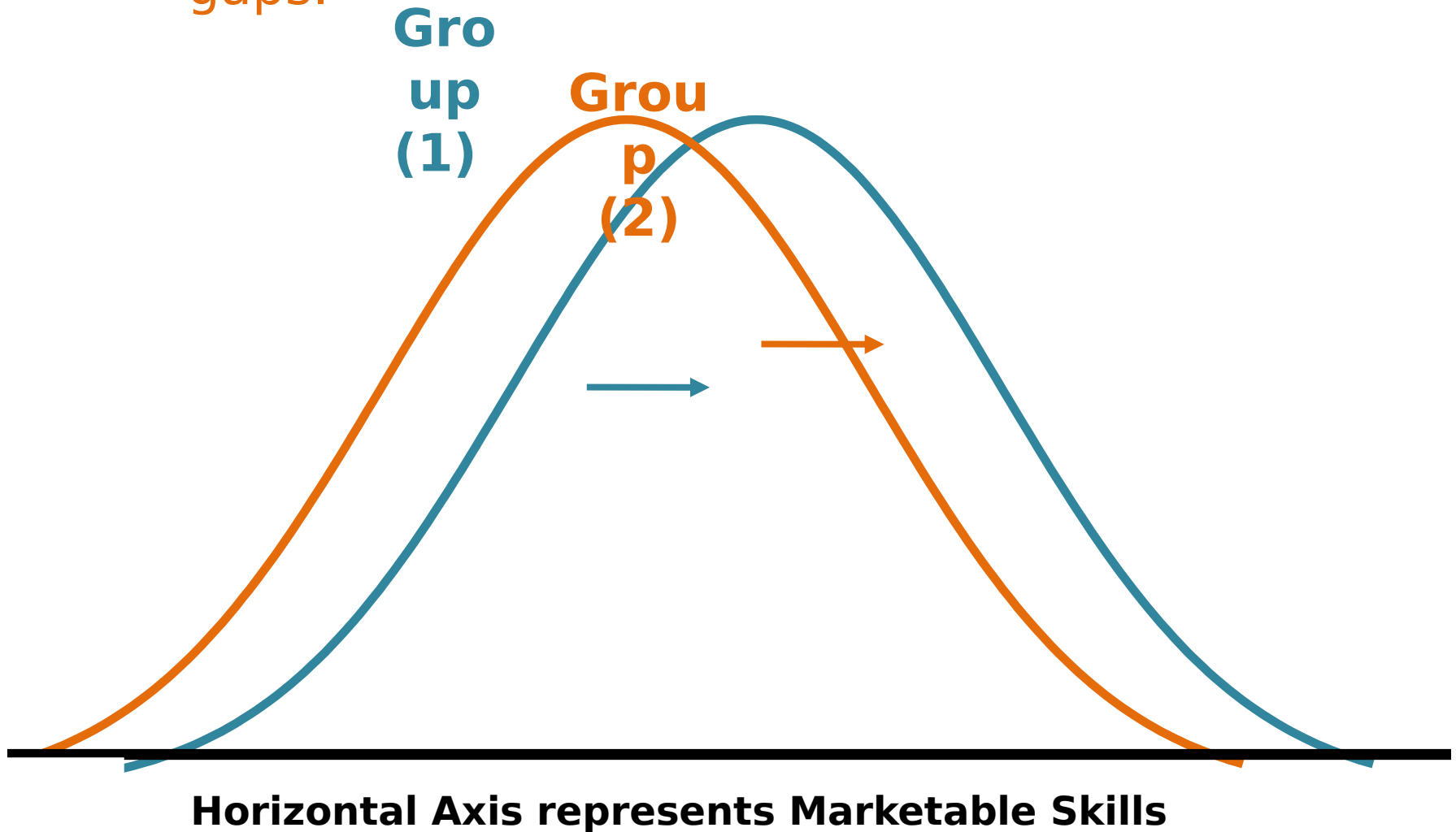
**Gro  
up  
(1)**

**Grou  
p  
(2)**



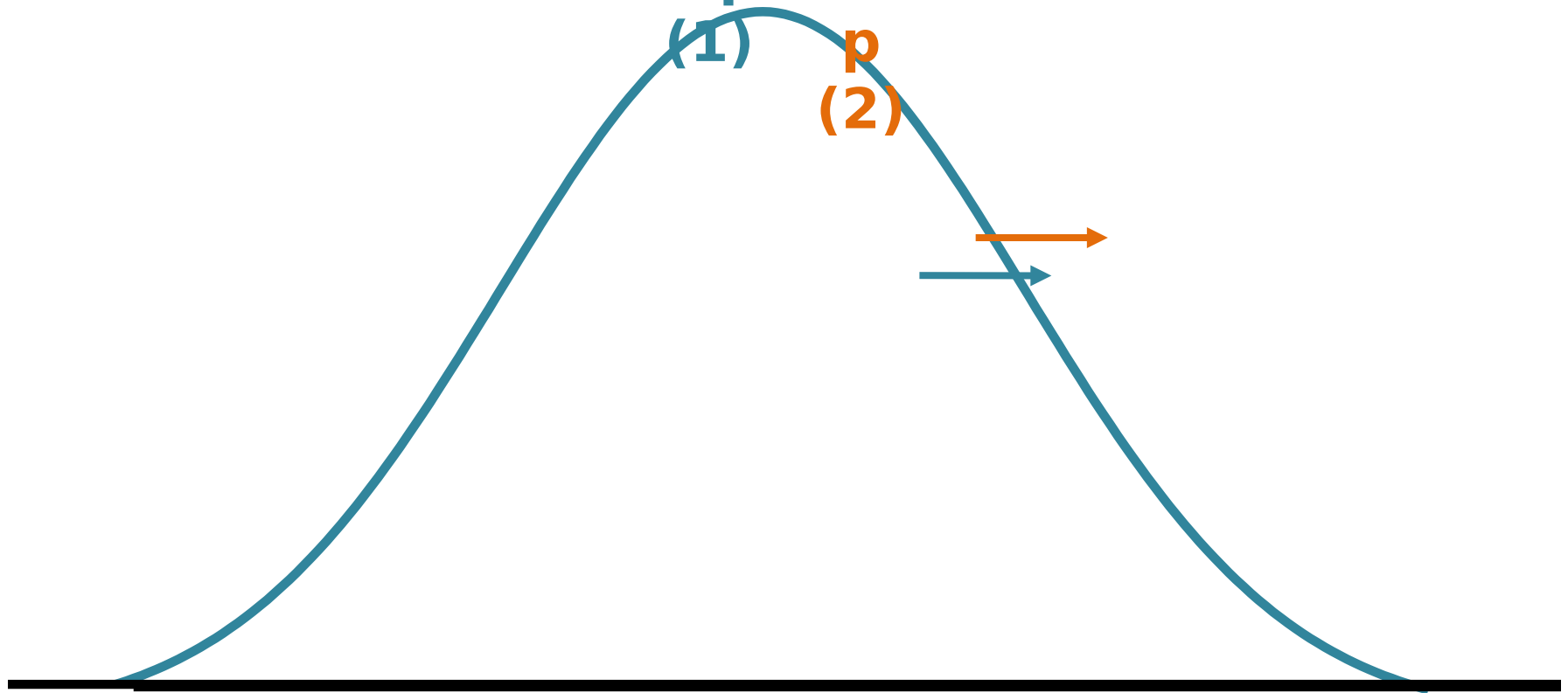
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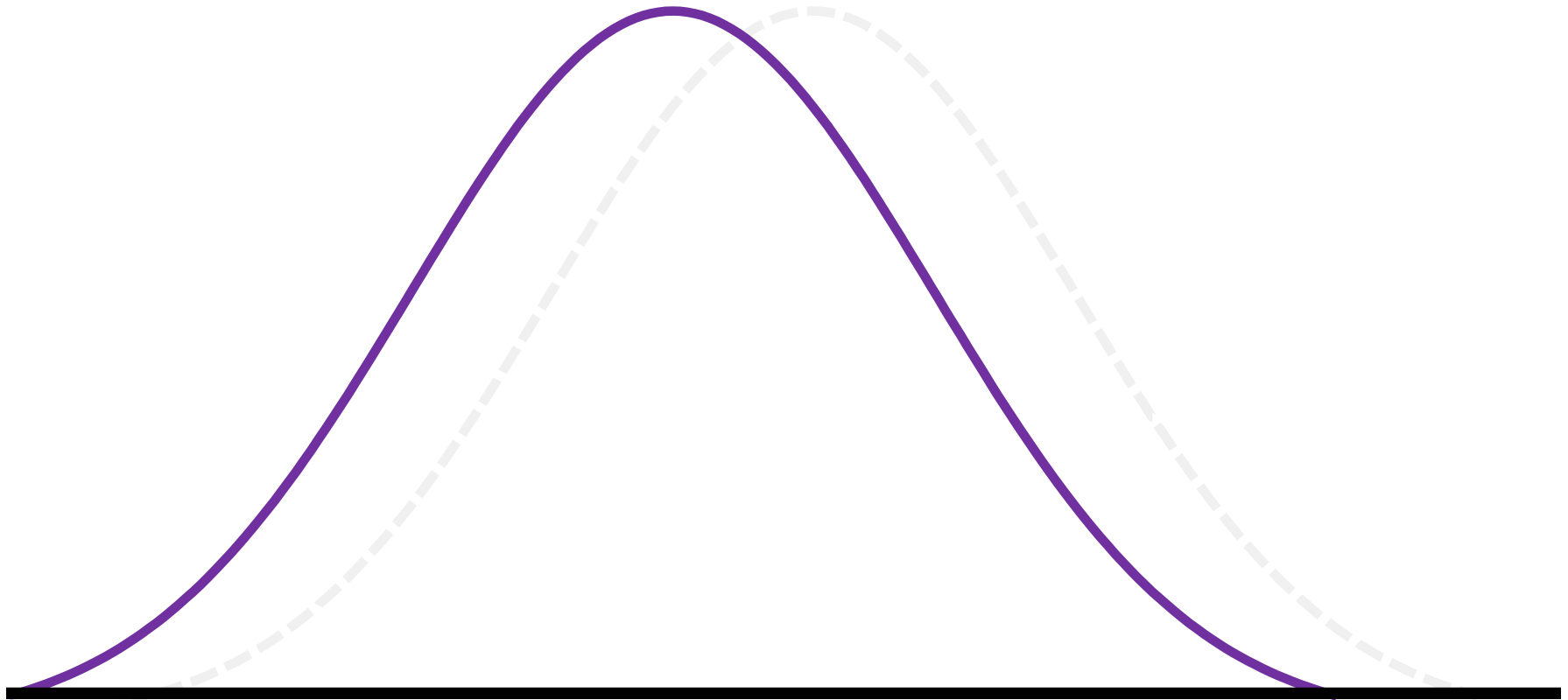
Group (1)  
Group (2)



**Horizontal Axis represents Marketable Skills**

Group Proportional Equality with Excellence  
= no between-group difference in  
achievement patterns and the overall level  
of achievement is high.

**Groups 1 & 2**



**Horizontal Axis represents Marketable Skills**

**IN ADDITION:** Pursue excellence  
with equity  
in processes and opportunities,  
not just in goals for marketable  
outcomes.\*

- **REGARDING RESPECT & DIGNITY:**  
Cultivate mutual respect and equal human  
dignity *across the entire school community*.
- **REGARDING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN:**  
Insist upon highly effective teaching and  
learning options for students from every  
background and *all* skill levels.

\*Processes = ways things are done and how people are treated

Opportunities = access to human and material resources and benefits





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**JUDGING SCHOOL QUALITY:  
LOOK AT GAINS, NOT LEVELS**

# How Effective is Your School District? A New Measure Shows Where Students Learn the Most

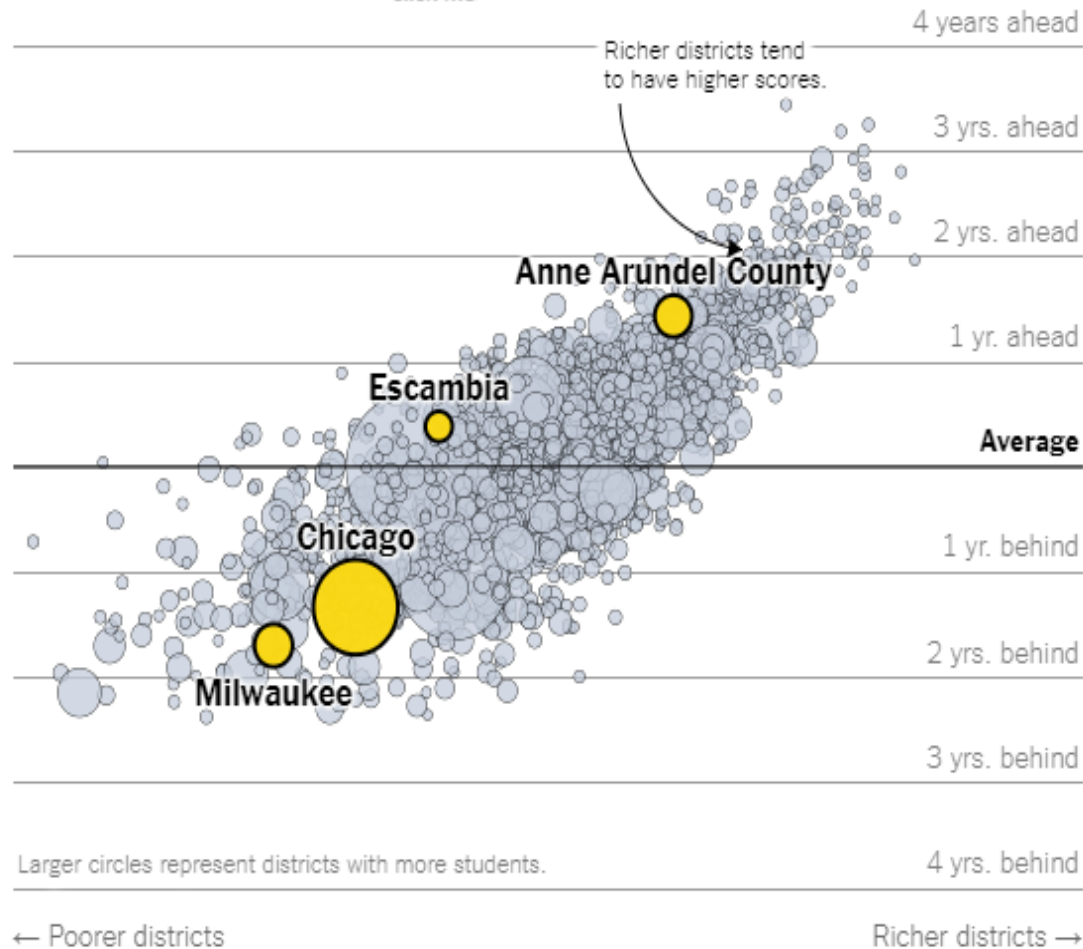
By Emily Badger and Keven Quealy Dec. 5, 2017



<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/12/05/upshot/a-better-way-to-compare-public-schools.html>

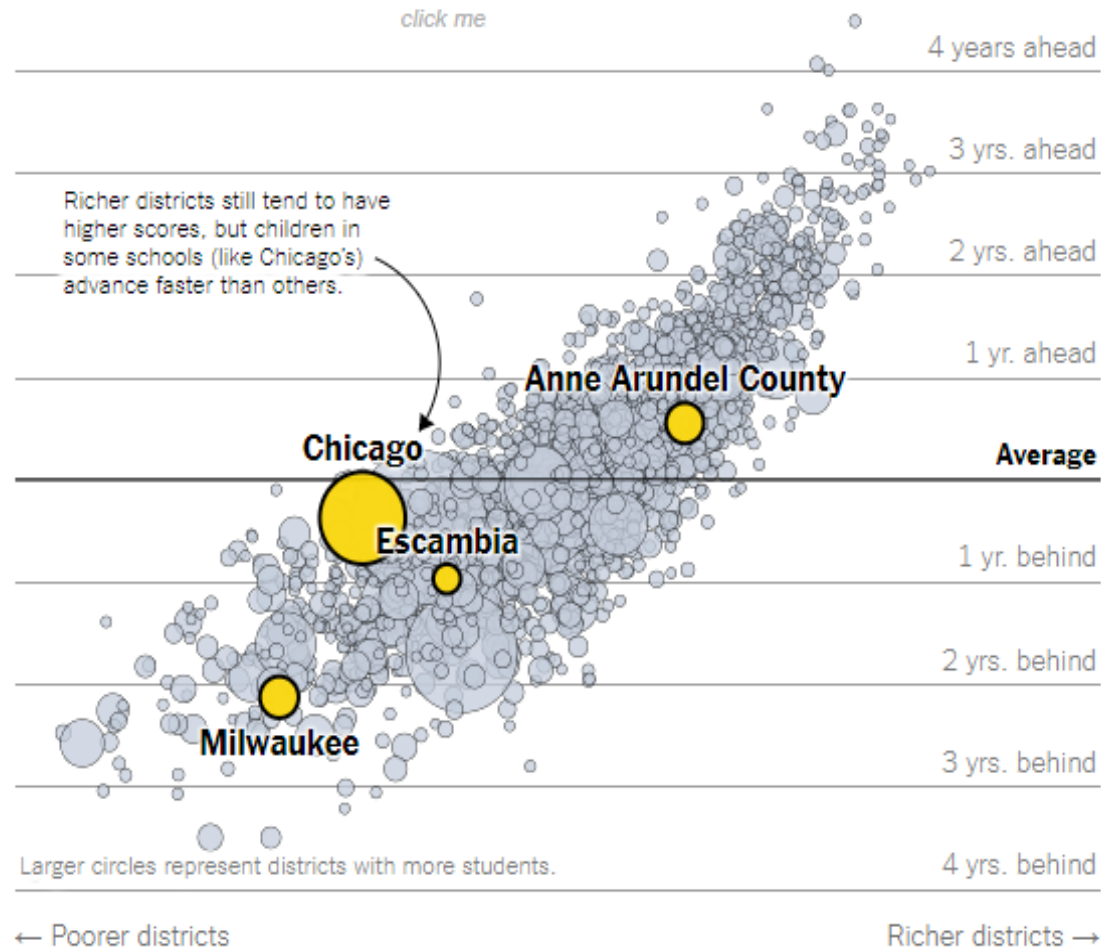
Test scores for **3rd graders** in 2,000 large school districts.

*click me*

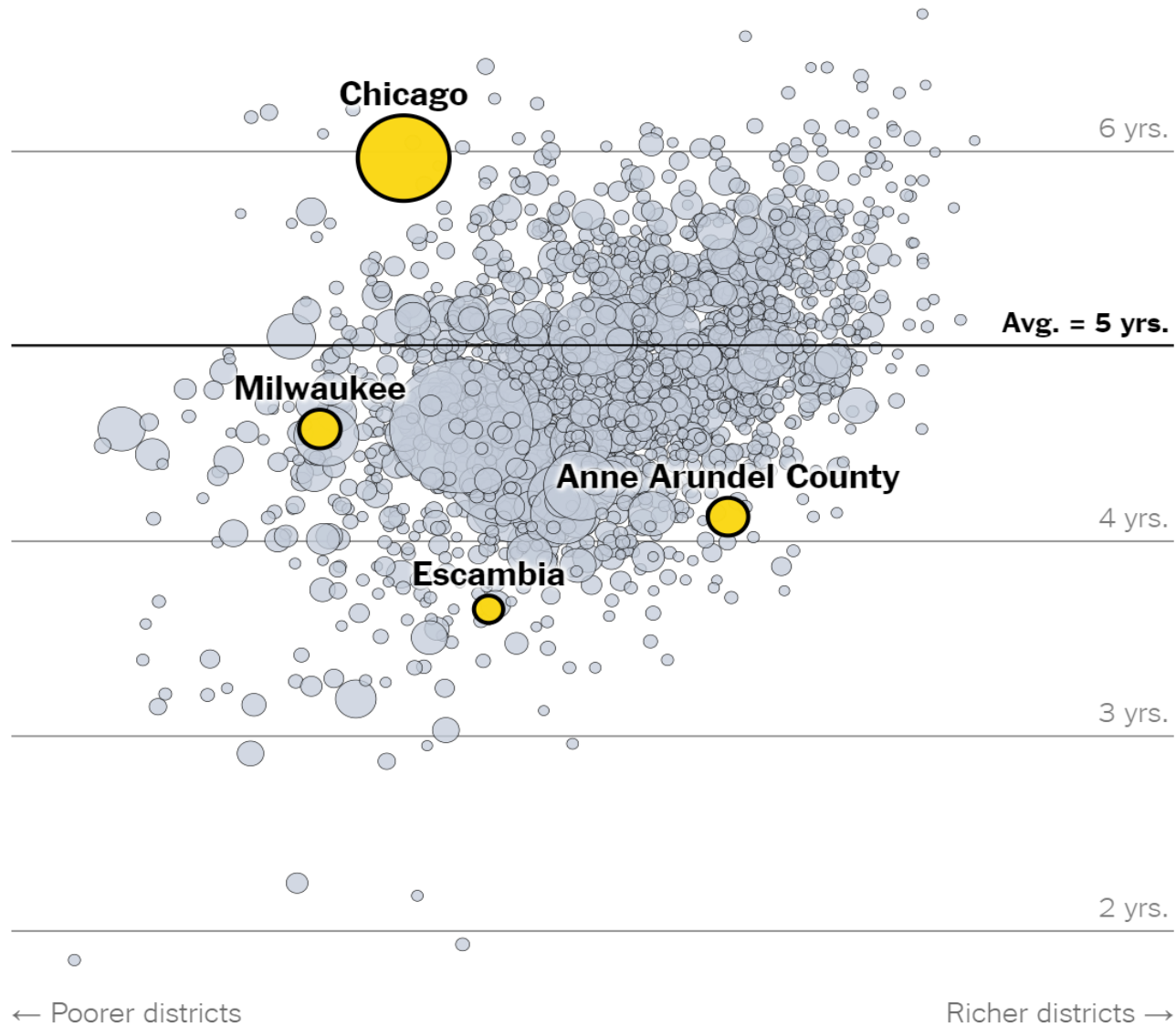


Test scores for **8th graders** in 2,000 large school districts.

*click me*



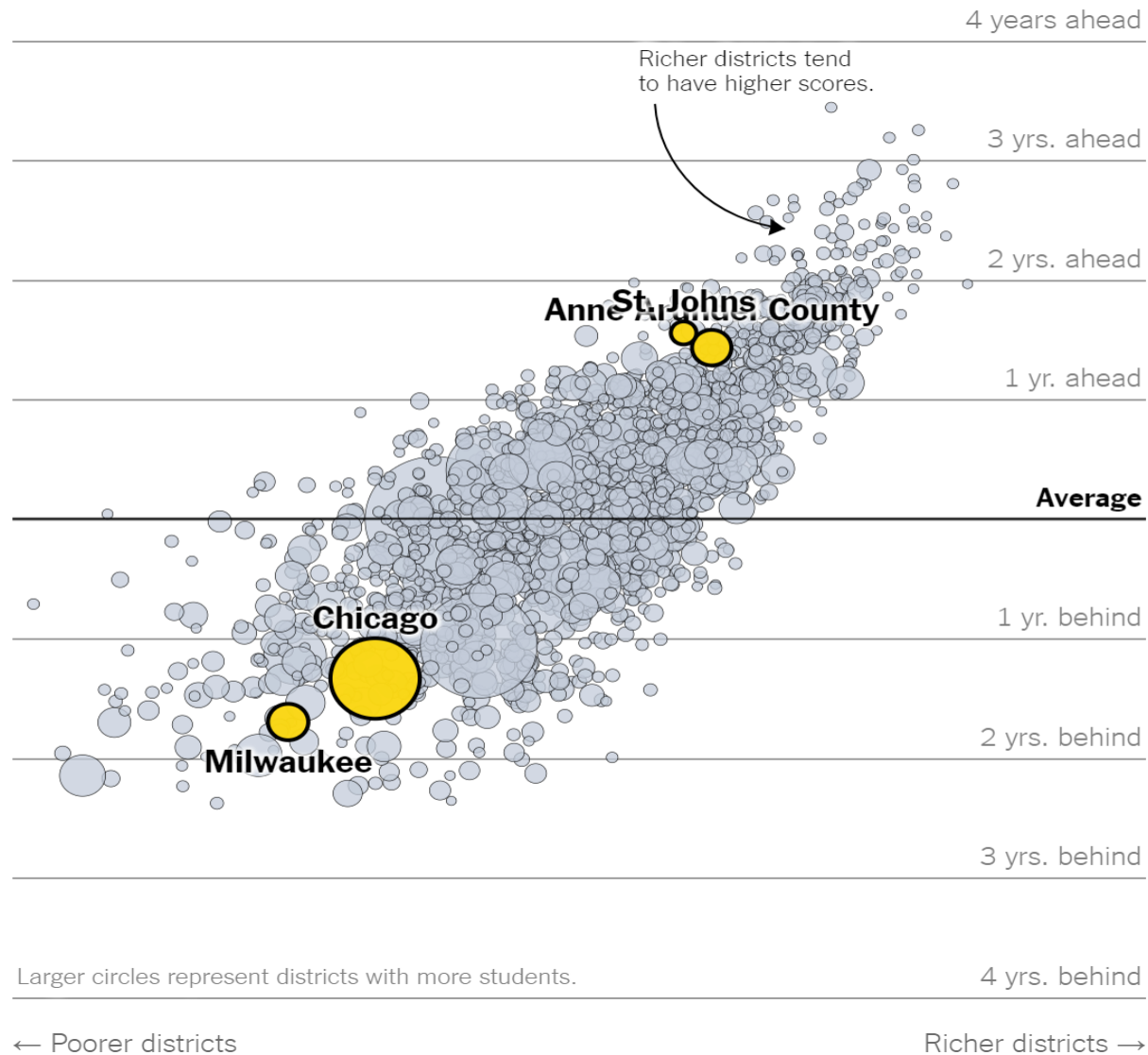
# Change in test scores between 3rd grade and 8th grade





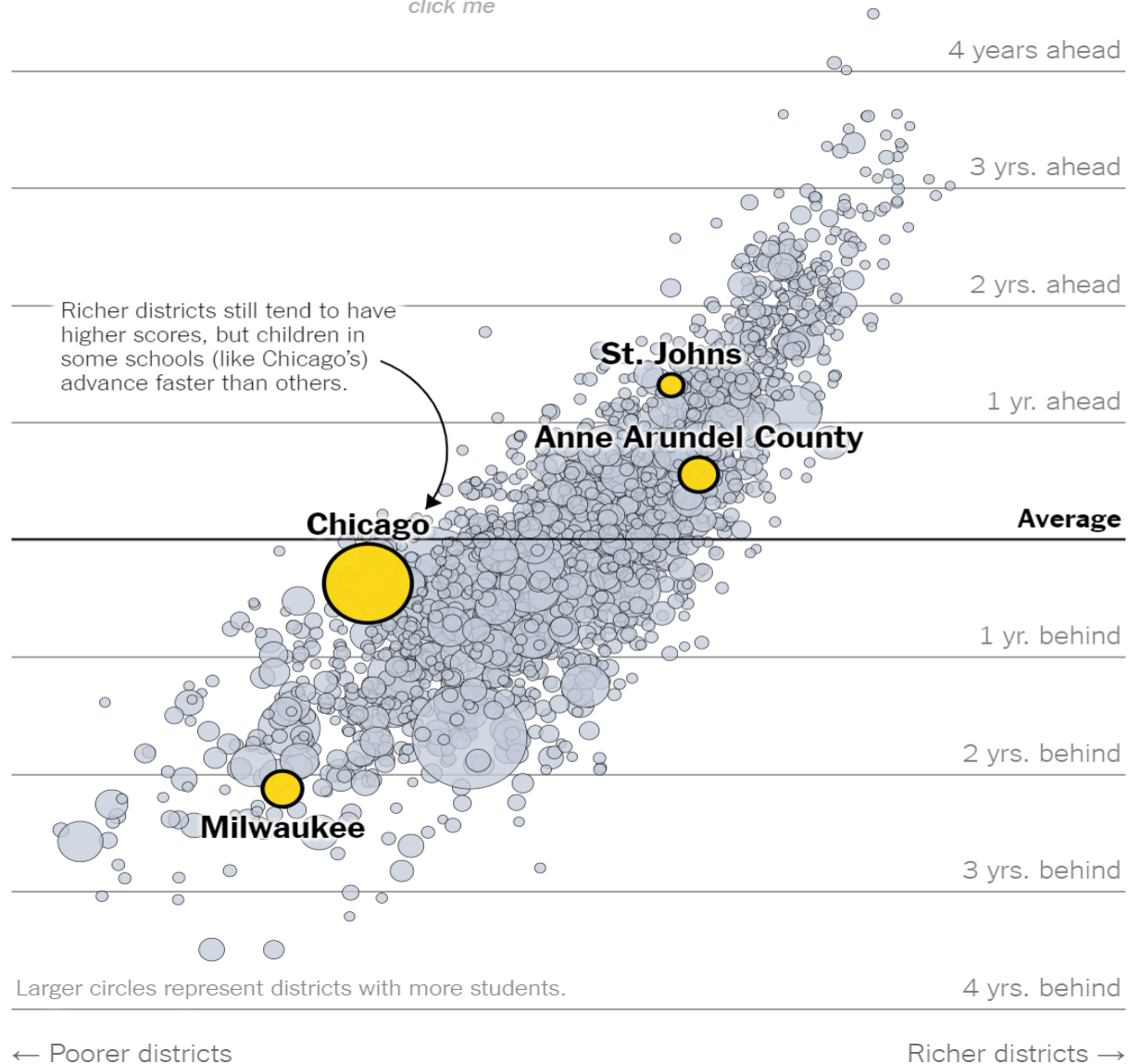
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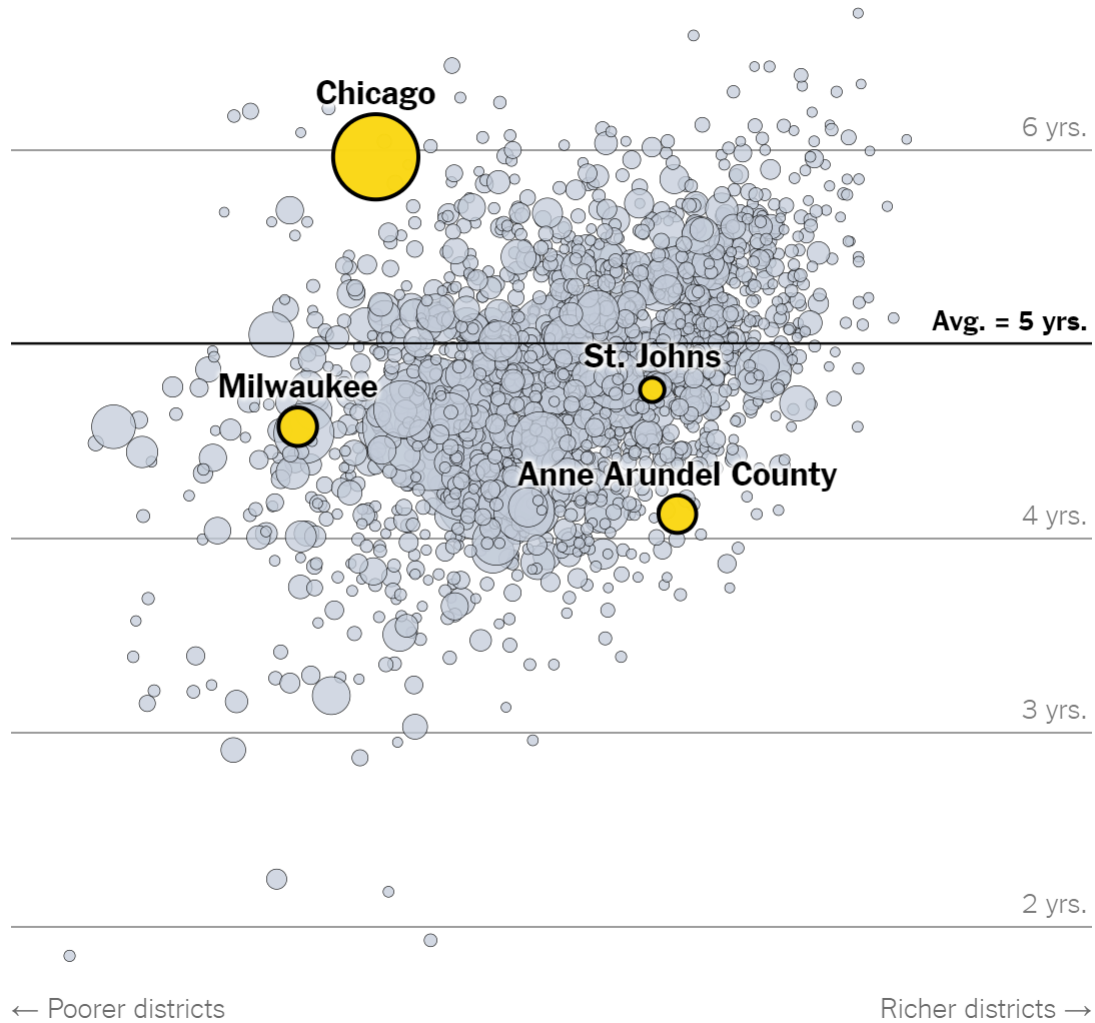


Test scores for **8th graders** in 2,000 large school districts.

*click me*

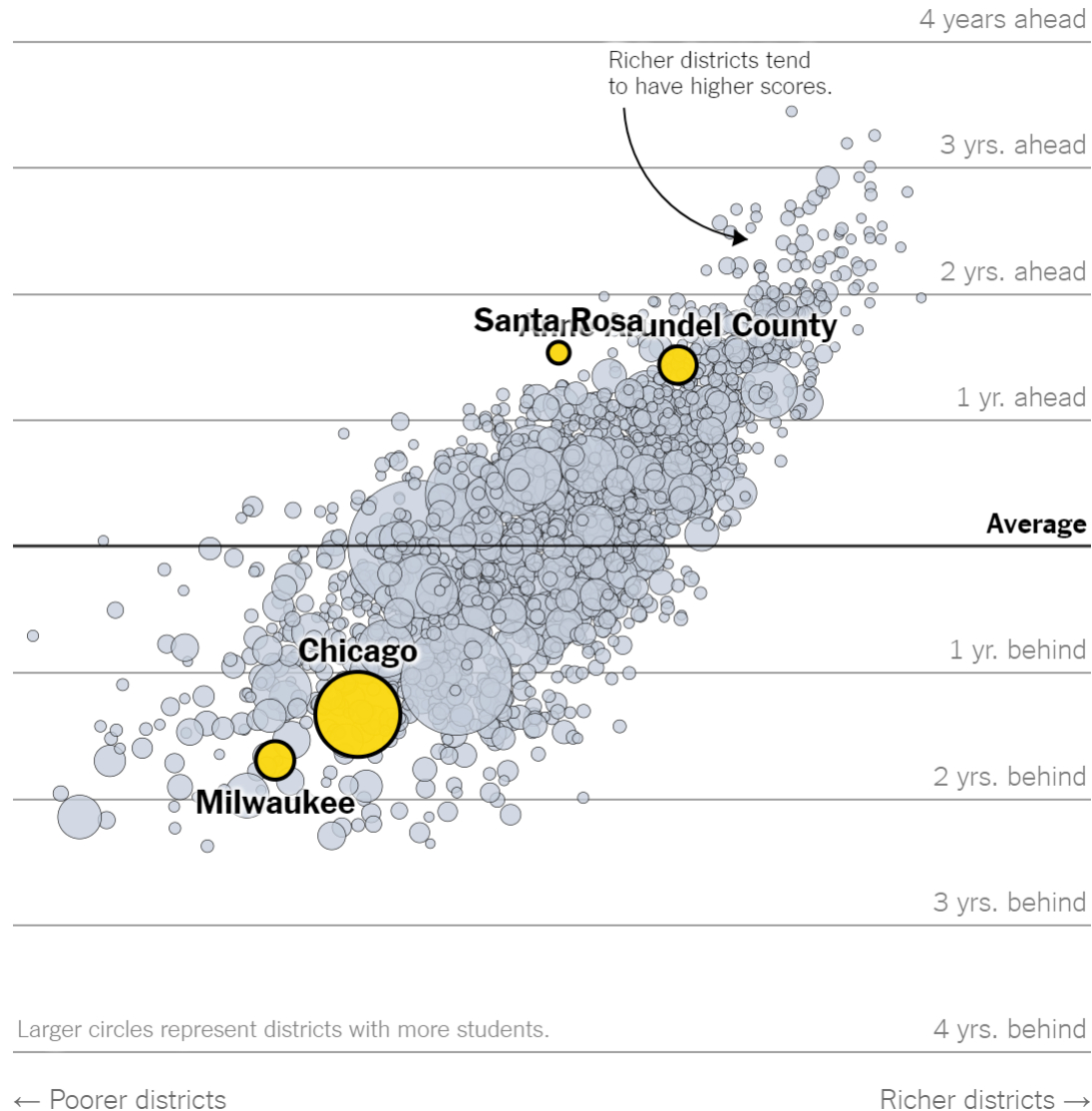


Change in test scores between 3rd grade and 8th grade



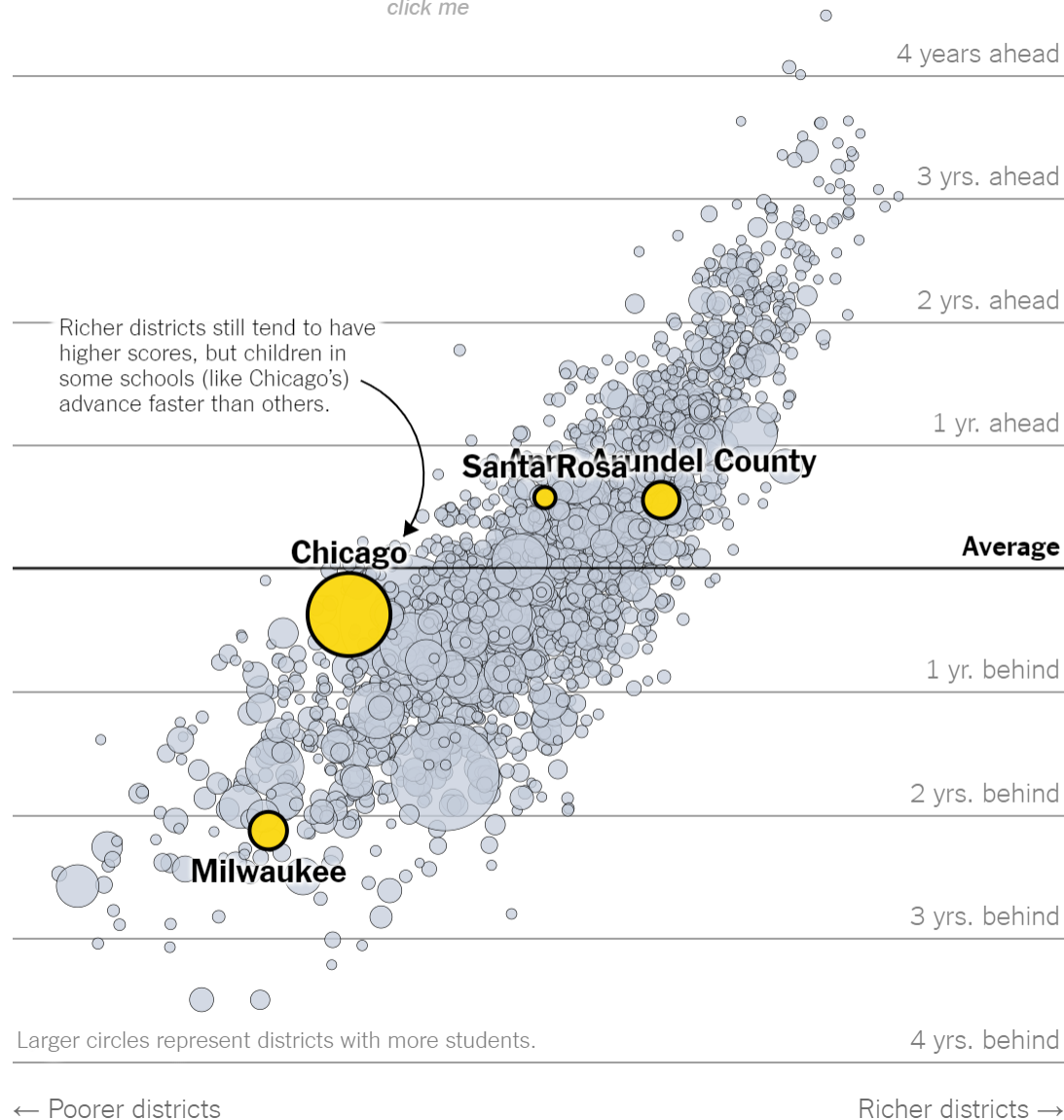
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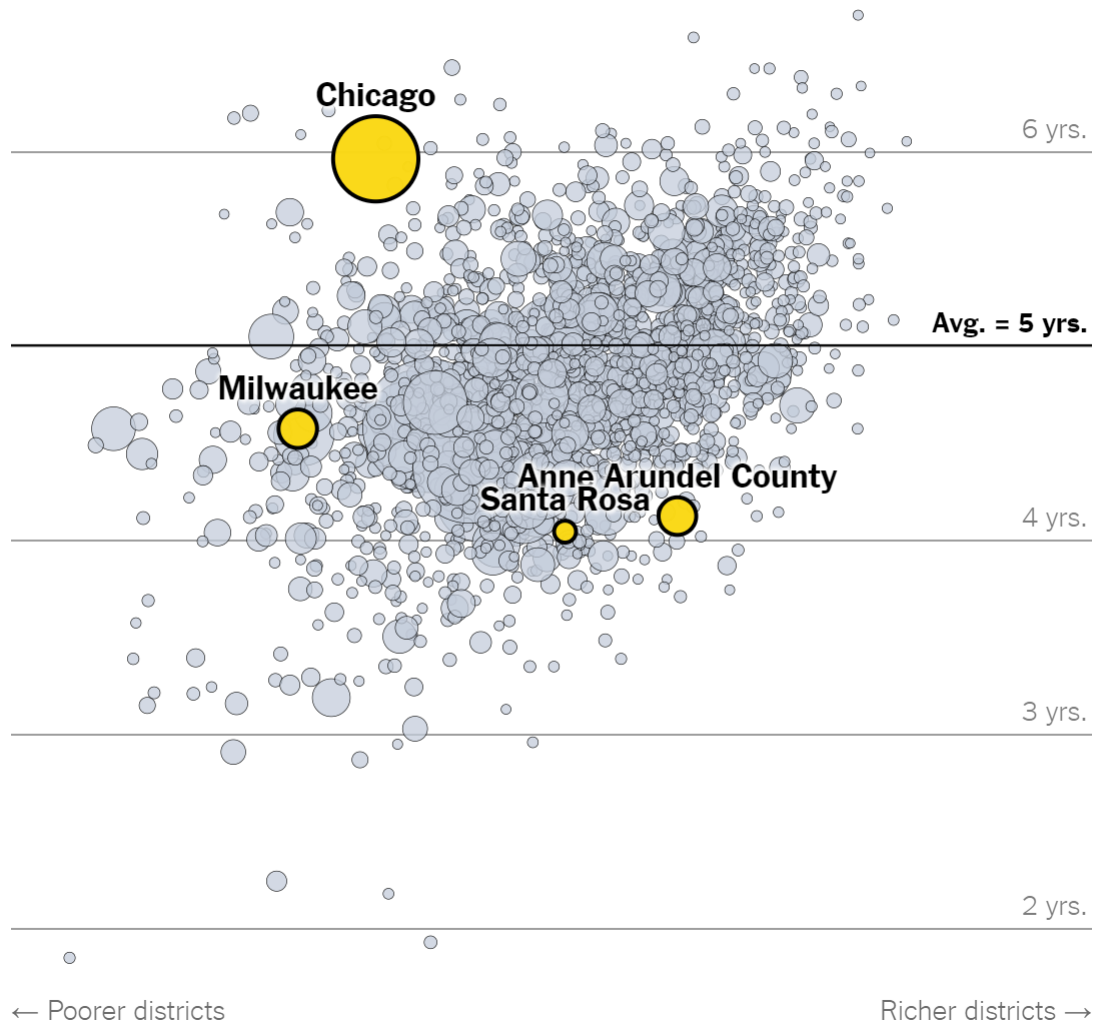
Test scores for **8th graders** in 2,000 large school districts.

*click me*



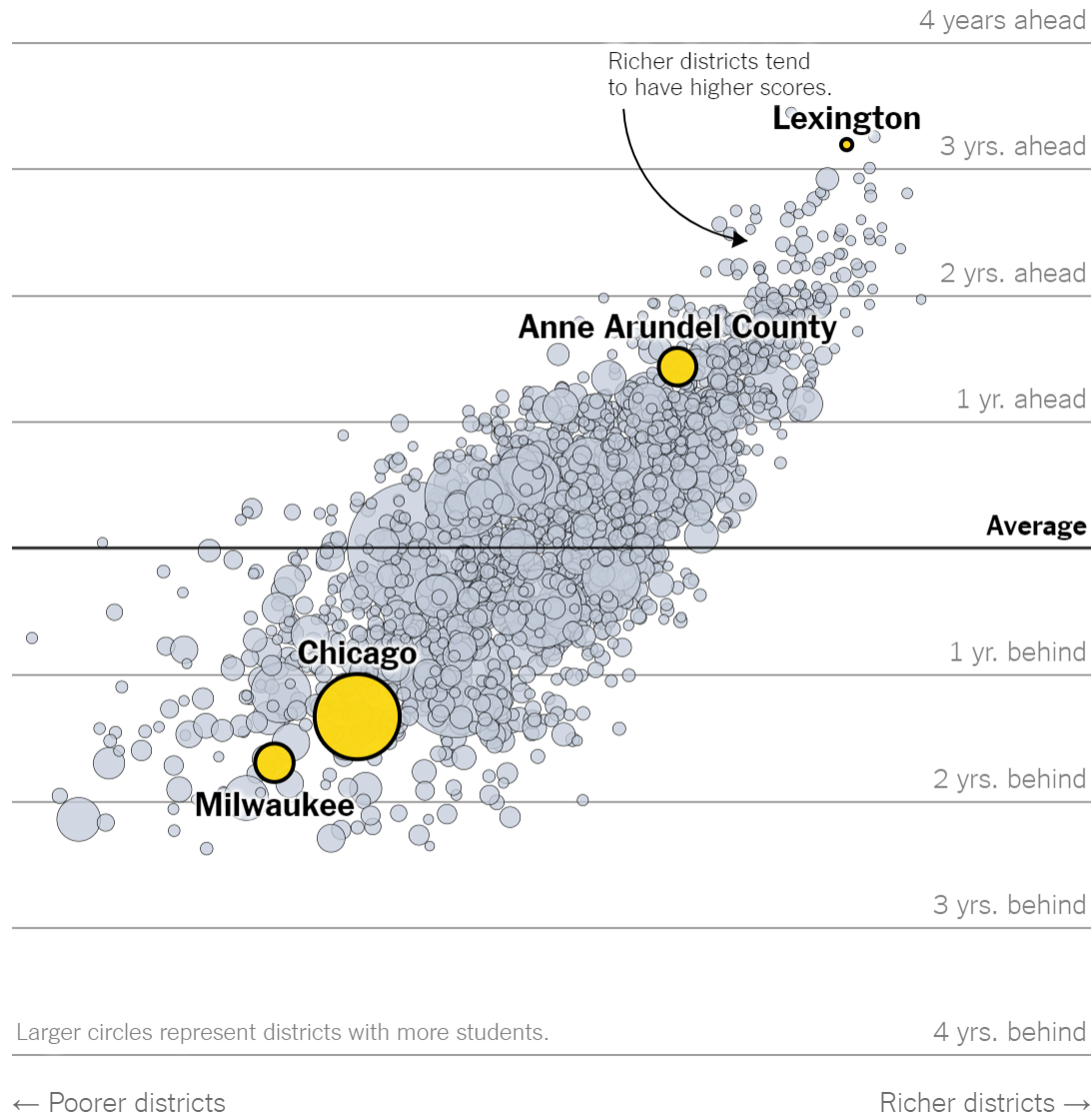


Change in test scores between 3rd grade and 8th grade



Test scores for **3rd graders** in 2,000 large school districts.

*click me*



Test scores for **8th graders** in 2,000 large school districts.

*click me*

**Lexington**



4 years ahead

3 yrs. ahead

2 yrs. ahead

1 yr. ahead

**Anne Arundel County**



**Chicago**



**Average**

1 yr. behind

2 yrs. behind

**Milwaukee**



3 yrs. behind

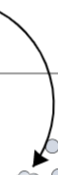
4 yrs. behind

Larger circles represent districts with more students.

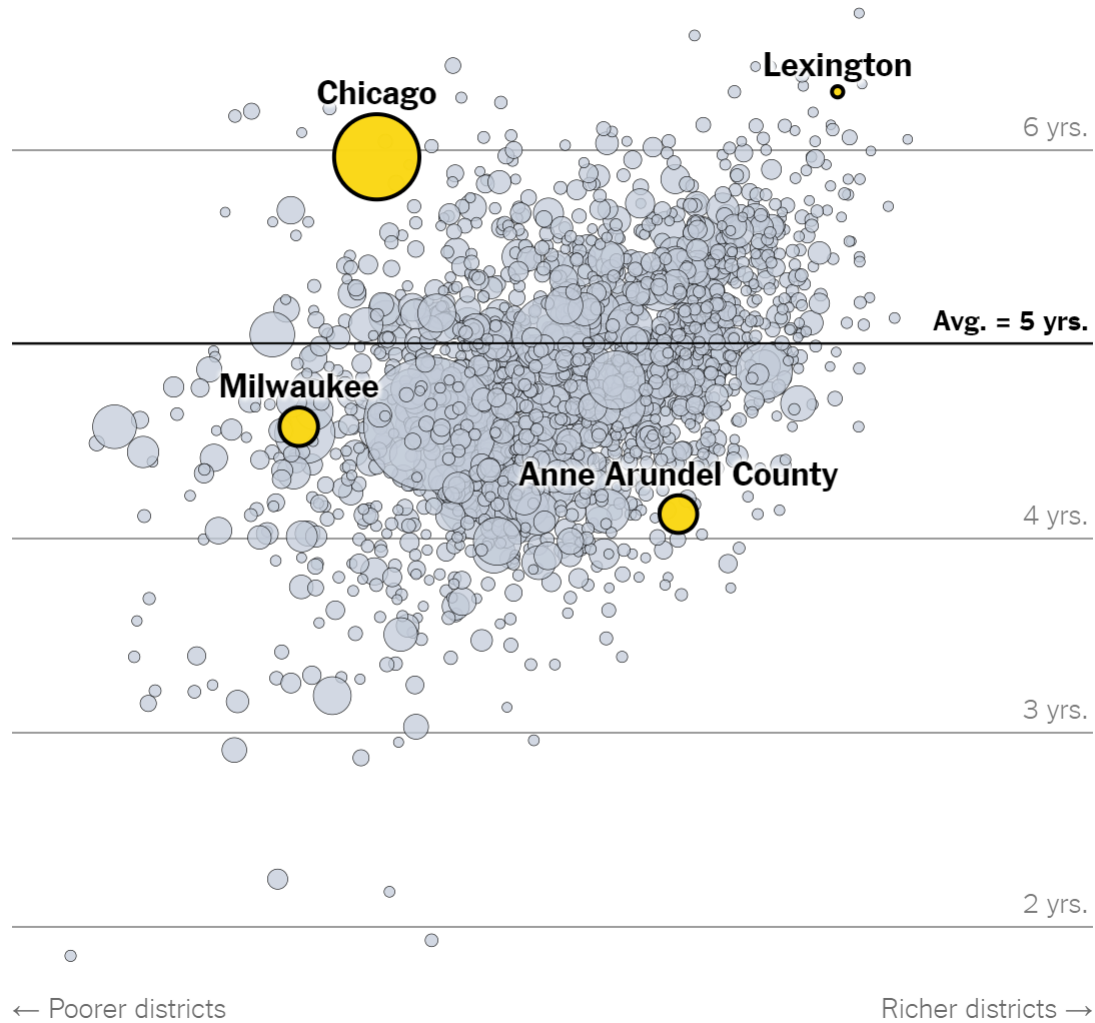
← Poorer districts

Richer districts →

Richer districts still tend to have higher scores, but children in some schools (like Chicago's) advance faster than others.



Change in test scores between 3rd grade and 8th grade





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# NURTURANCE

- BY PARENTS
- BY TEACHERS
- BY PEERS



# Begin at or Before Birth





**SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL  
SKILLS**

---

**LANGUAGE SKILLS**

---

**NUMERACY SKILLS**

---

**CURIOSITY**

---

**LITERACY SKILLS**

---

# The Basics™ Principles



**MAXIMIZE LOVE, MANAGE  
STRESS**



**TALK, SING, AND POINT**



**COUNT, GROUP, AND  
COMPARE**



**EXPLORE THROUGH MOVEMENT  
AND PLAY**



**READ AND DISCUSS STORIES**

# Parenting

from early childhood through  
adolescence

"If you are a parent, or plan to be, read this book. You'll learn what you can do—and there is a lot you can do—to help your child succeed in the fullest sense of the word. Beautifully written, impeccably crafted. I loved it."

—ANGELA DUCKWORTH

author of *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*

# THE FORMULA

UNLOCKING THE SECRETS TO  
RAISING HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN

RONALD F. FERGUSON

*Director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University*

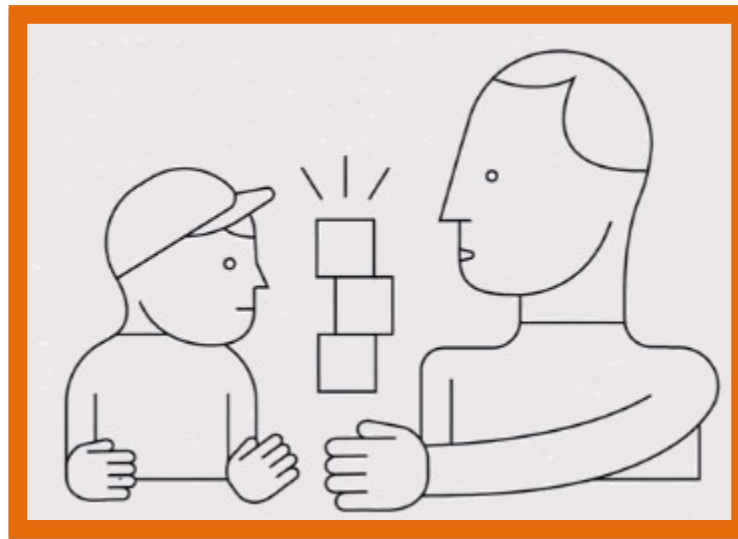
and TATSHA ROBERTSON

The hidden pattern in  
how outstanding graduates  
of Harvard University  
and other top schools  
were parented

February 2019,  
Ben Bella Publishers

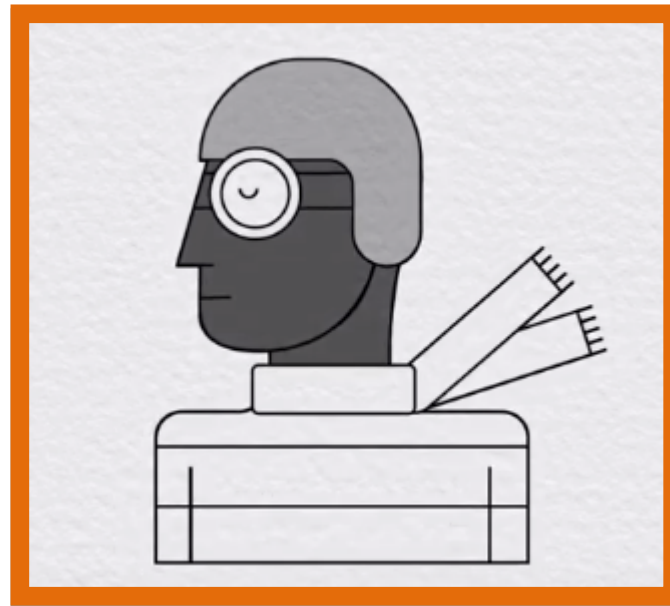


# The Early-Learning Partner





# The Flight Engineer



# The Fixer



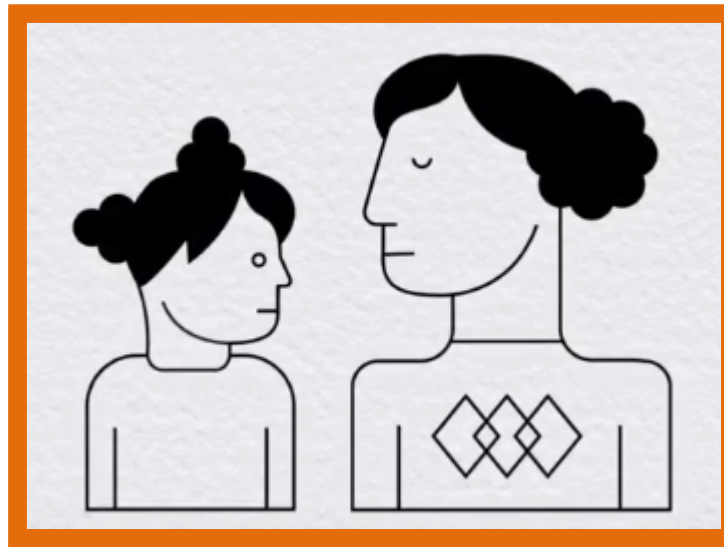
# The Revealer



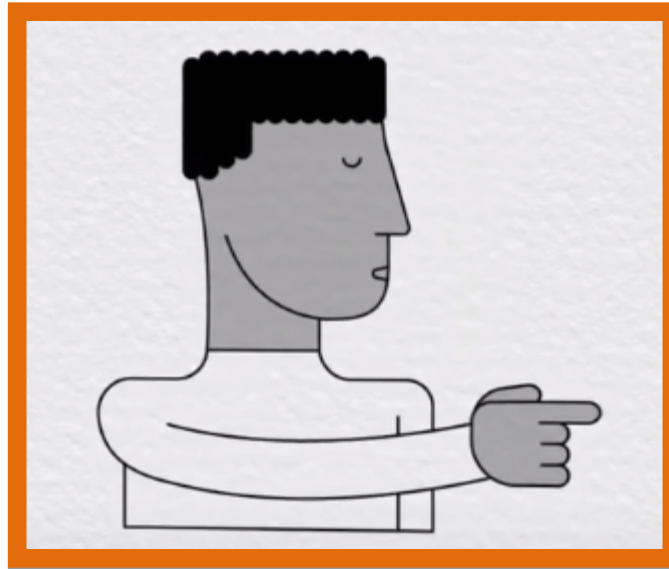
# The Philosopher



# The Model

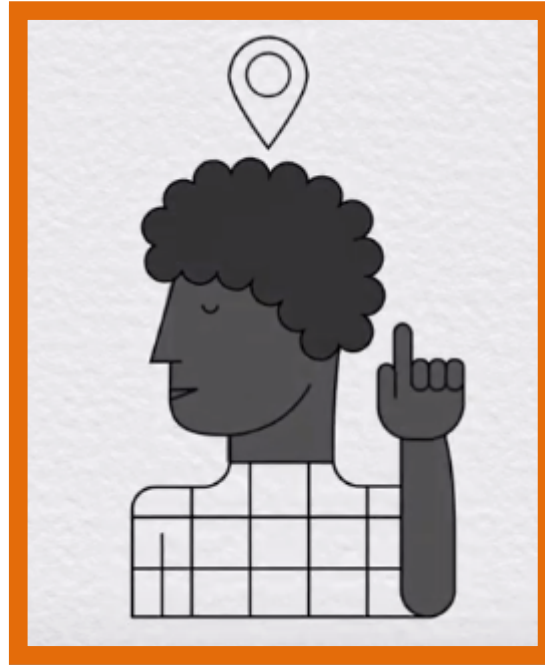


# The Negotiator





# The GPS Navigational Voice



# Teaching

# Teaching Produces:

## TESTED OUTCOMES

Reading Skills  
Math Skills  
Reasoning Skills  
Academic Knowledge

## AGENCY-RELATED FACTORS

Growth Mindset  
Conscientiousness  
Future Orientation  
Persistence

```
graph TD; A[TESTED OUTCOMES] --> D([SCHOOL AND LIFE SUCCESS]); B[AGENCY-RELATED FACTORS] --> D;
```

**SCHOOL  
AND LIFE  
SUCCESS**

# Student Expressions of Agency



Student Has Agency

- ✓ Punctuality
- ✓ Good Conduct
- ✓ Effort
- ✓ Help Seeking
- ✓ Conscientiousness



Student Lacks Agency

- ✓ Faking Effort
- ✓ Not Trying
- ✓ Giving Up Too Easily
- ✓ Help Avoidance



CARE



CONFER



CLASS.MG  
MT



CHALLENGE



CAPTIVATE



CONSOLIDATE



CLARIFY

TRIPOD'S  
7Cs™

# The Influence of Teaching

## Beyond Standardized Test Scores: Engagement, Mindsets, and Agency

A Study of 16,000 Sixth through Ninth Grade Classrooms



Ronald F. Ferguson with  
Sarah F. Phillips, Jacob F. S. Rowley, and Jocelyn W. Friedlander

October 2015



The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University  
*Excellence with Equity*

<http://agi.harvard.edu/projects/TeachingandAgency.pdf>



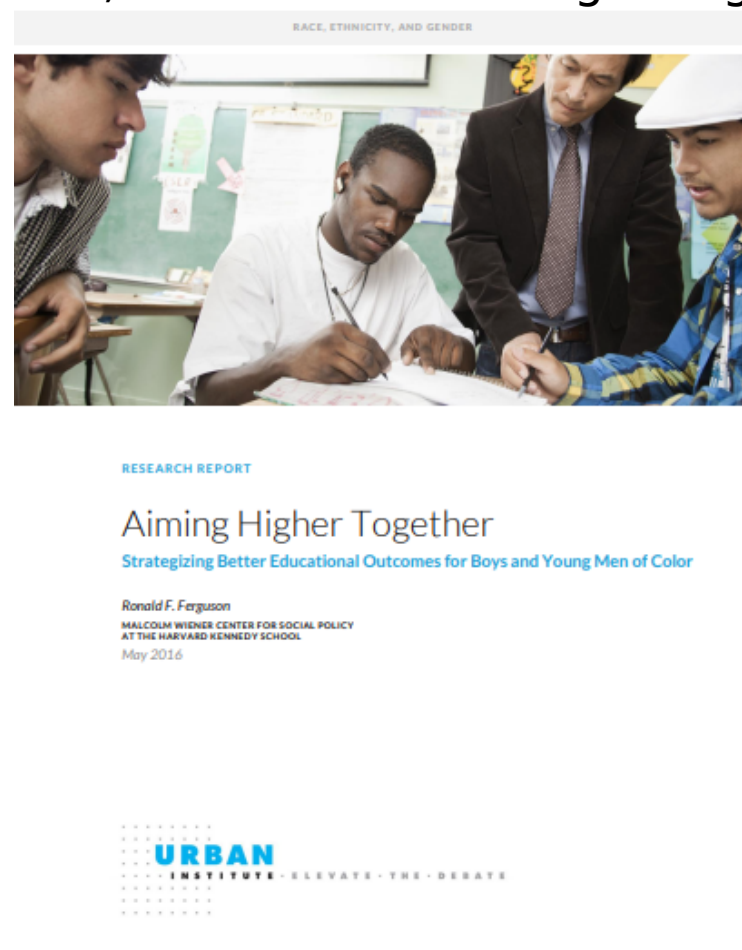
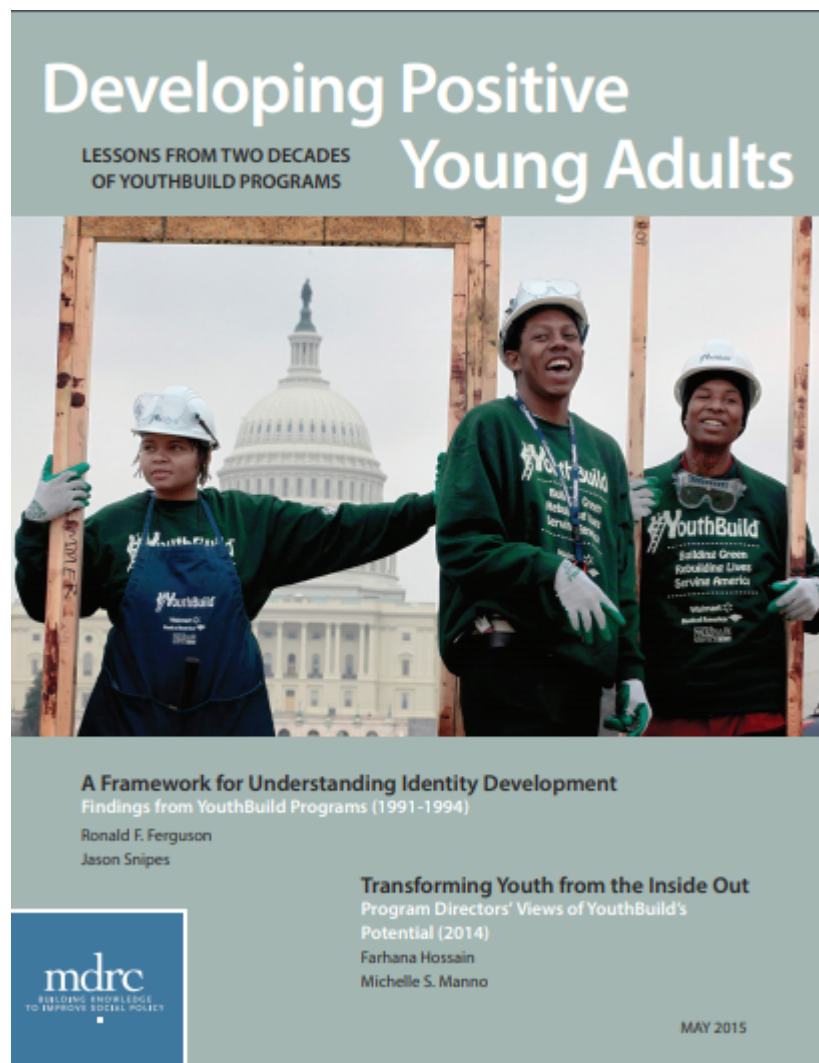
# Peer Dynamics



# Three Big Issues

- Peers teach one another their identities starting in kindergarten
- Pluralistic Ignorance: youth conform to mistaken perceptions of others' beliefs
- Young people need help avoiding or collectively dismantling negative aspects of

For young people disconnected from school, see the section beginning on p. 3



[https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/YouthBuild%20Development%20Report\\_2015.pdf](https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/YouthBuild%20Development%20Report_2015.pdf)

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/80481/2000784-Aiming-Higher-Together-Strategizing-Better-Educational-Outcomes-for-Boys-and-Young-Men-of-Color.pdf>

# Career Readiness



Poem:

*All they Said Was Graduate*

# What Makes a Young Person Career Ready?

## Options

- They are aware of multiple career options and have identified a few priority careers *of interest*.

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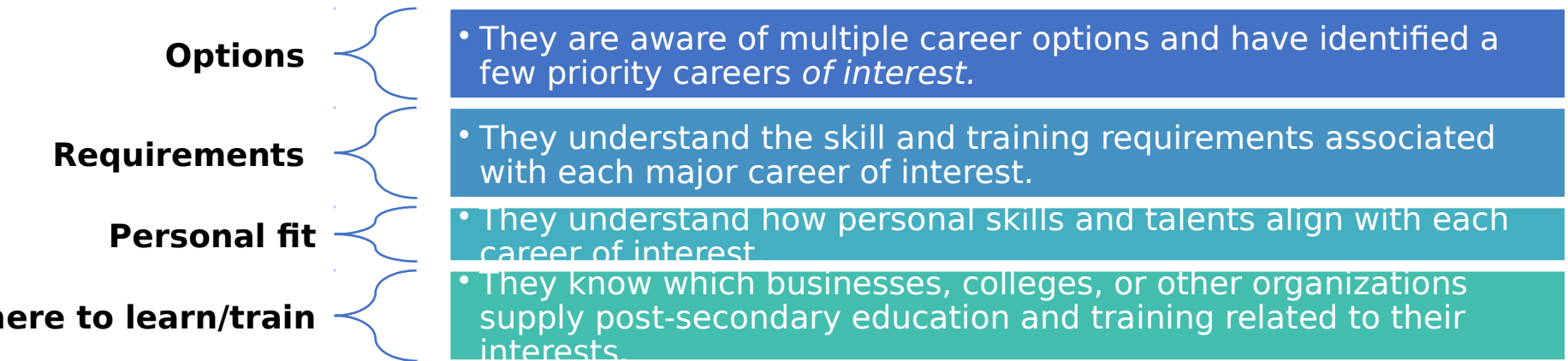
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## Personal fit

- They understand how personal skills and talents align with each career of interest

er

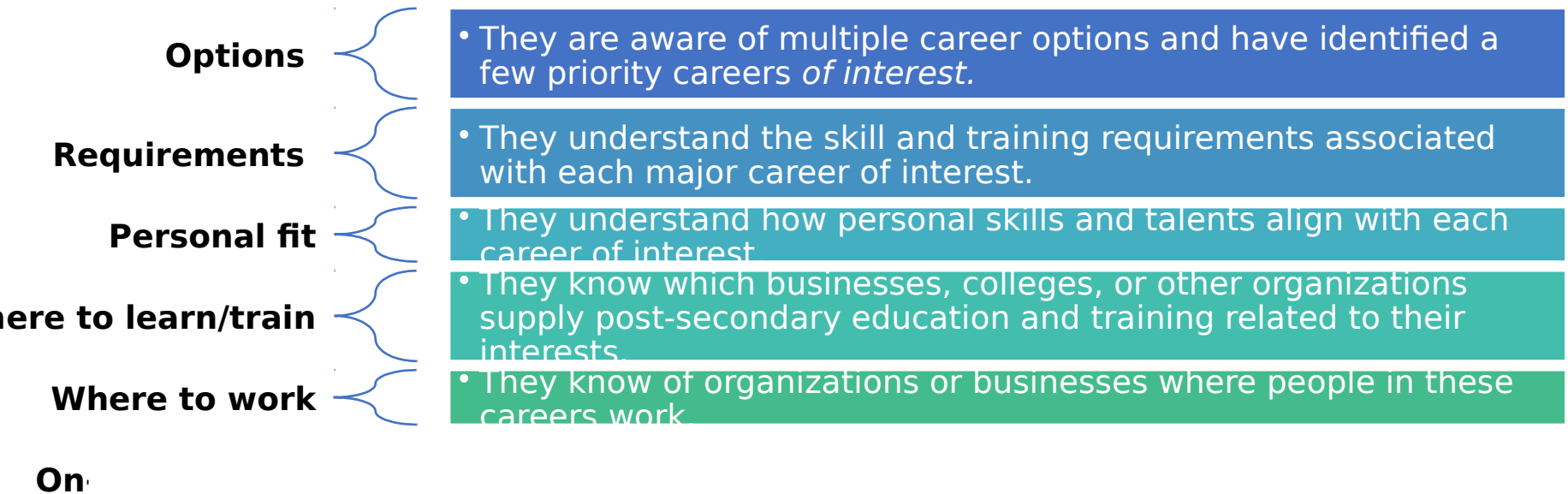
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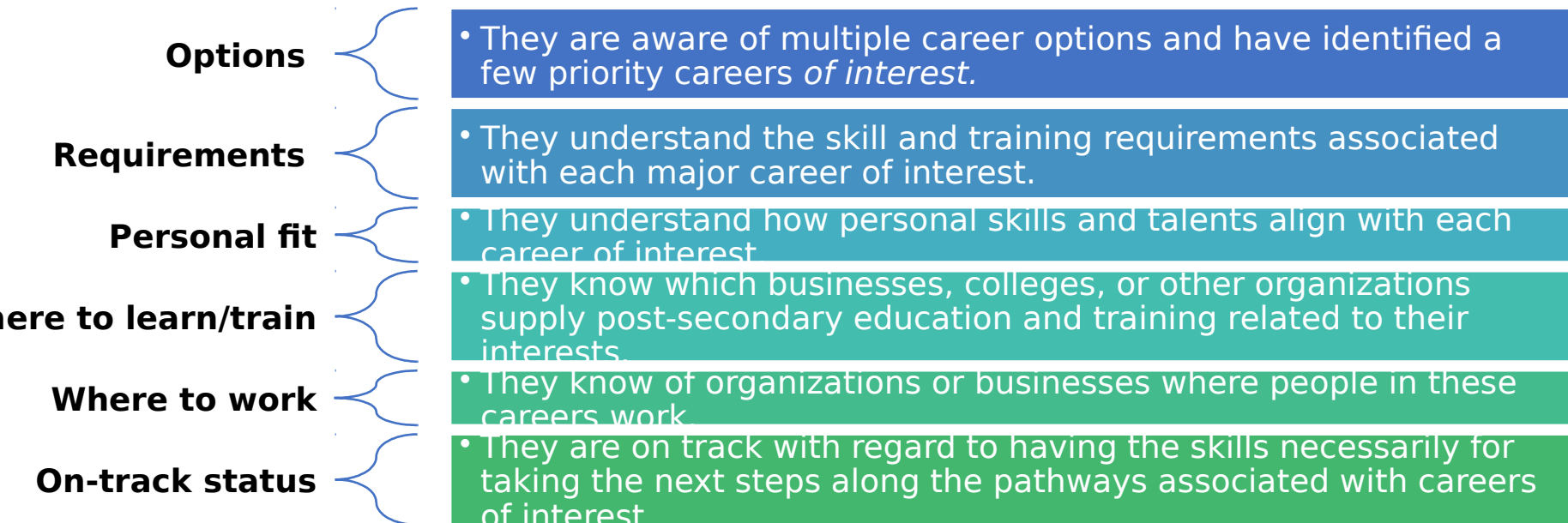
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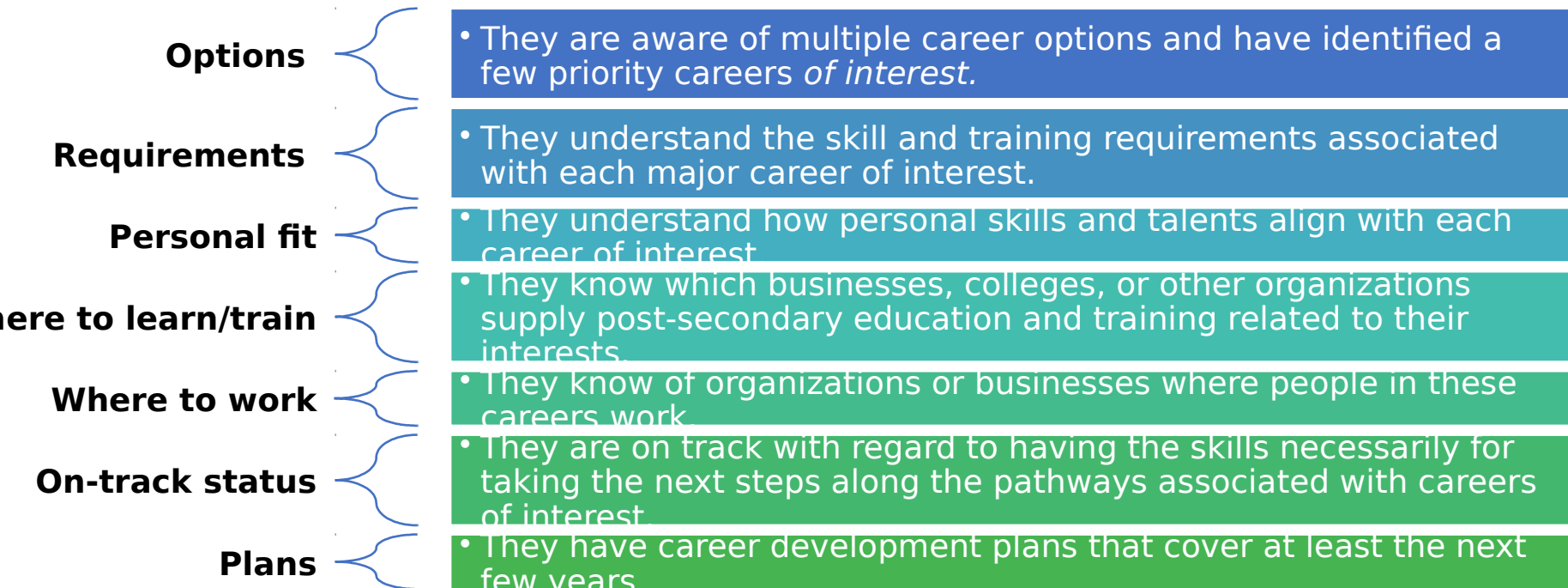
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<b>Personal fit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They understand how personal skills and talents align with each career of interest</li></ul>
<b>Where to learn/train</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They know which businesses, colleges, or other organizations supply post-secondary education and training related to their interests.</li></ul>
<b>Where to work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They know of organizations or businesses where people in these careers work</li></ul>
<b>On-track status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are on track with regard to having the skills necessarily for taking the next steps along the pathways associated with careers of interest</li></ul>
<b>Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They have career development plans that cover at least the next few years</li></ul>
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are taking the necessary and appropriate steps to execute those plans</li></ul>

# What Makes a Young Person Career Ready?

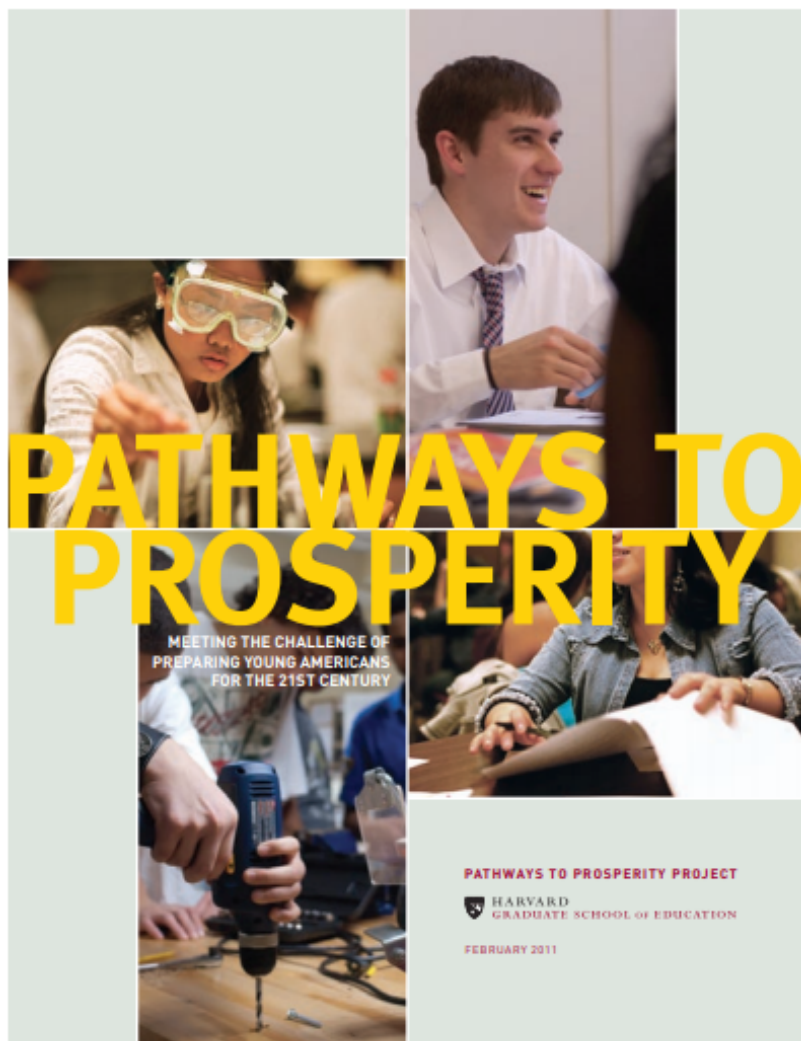
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What would it take to achieve these in a broad-based manner?



[http://agi.harvard.edu/projects/Pathways\\_to\\_Prospersity\\_Feb2011.pdf](http://agi.harvard.edu/projects/Pathways_to_Prospersity_Feb2011.pdf)



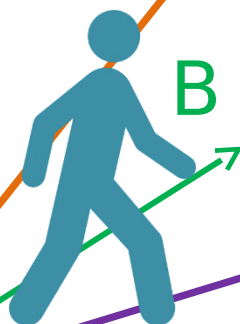
<http://agi.harvard.edu/pathways/CreatingPathwaystoProsperityReport2014.pdf>

Helping Every Child  
Find Their Life Purpose

Life  
Direction 2



A



B

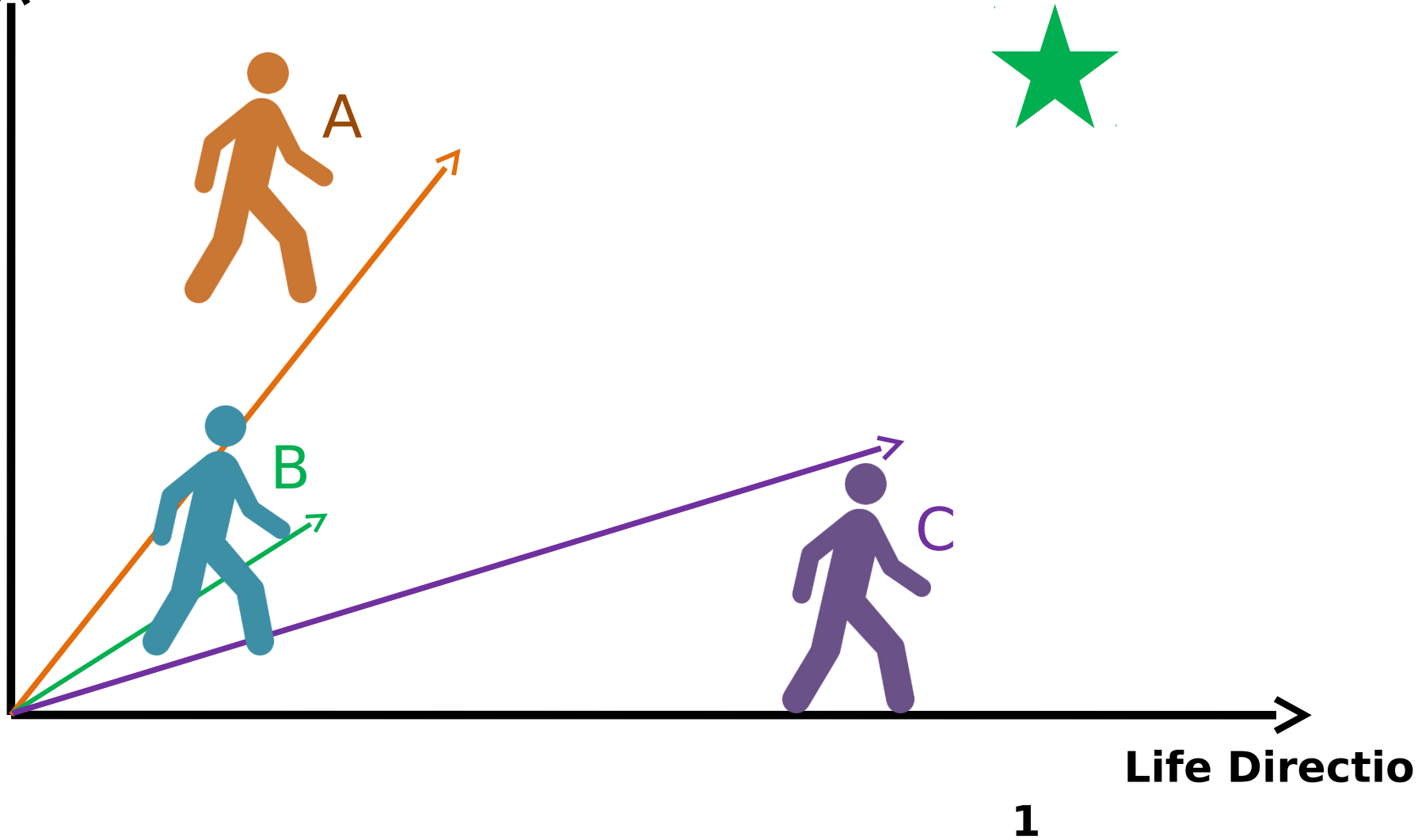


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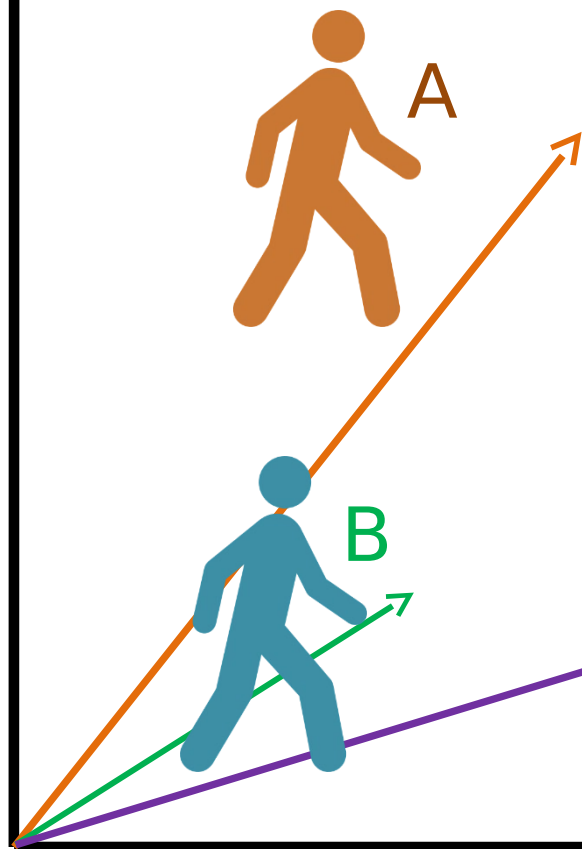
Life Direction

1

Life  
Direction 2



Life  
Direction 2



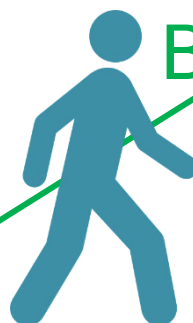
Life Direction 1

1

Life  
Direction 2



A



B



C

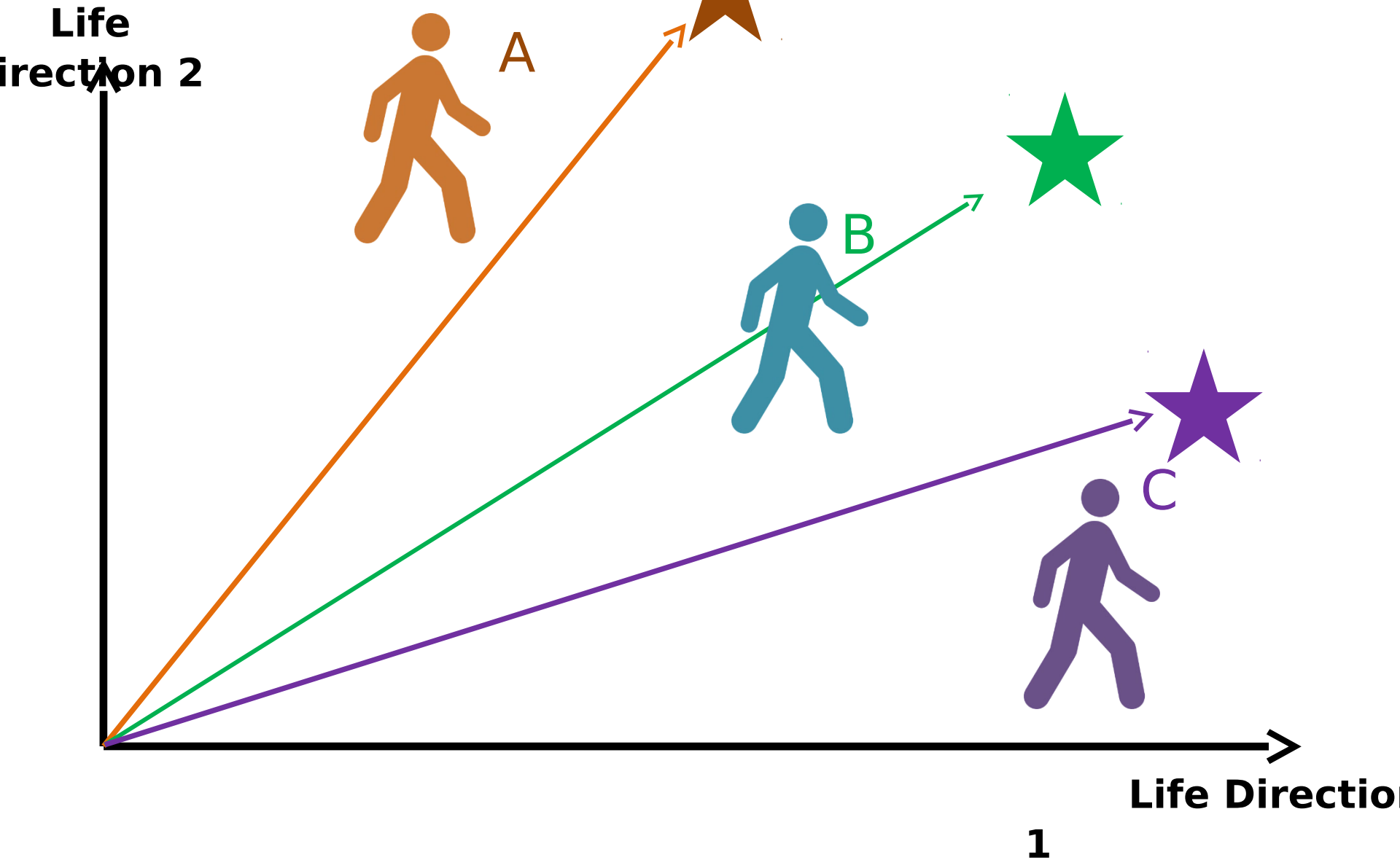


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Life Direction



For each of us, finding our personal North Star is a life's journey.



## RECAP:

- Fully-Realized Human Beings = Smarts + Purpose + Agency
- There are no throw-away ages
- Goal for narrowing gaps: group-proportional equality with excellence
- Excellence with equity in processes and opportunities
- Judge school quality by looking at achievement gains, not levels
- The eight parental roles in the Ferguson/Robertson Formula
- The Tripod 7Cs™ of effective teaching
- Students need help coping with peer cultures
- Adolescents need preparation for school-to-career transitions
- Every life has a unique North Star

# Poem

## *Hardships and Distractions*